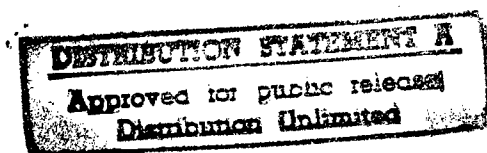




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[The following are translations of selected articles from the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL published in Moscow. Refer to the table of contents for a listing of any articles not translated.]

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MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 1, 1989

Start of the Turning Point

00010006a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 89 (signed to press
29 Dec 88) pp 15-24

[Archival materials, published under the heading "From the Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense," compiled by Lt Col (Ret) V.V. Tarakanov, senior reader at the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense: "The Battle of Moscow: The Documents Prove the Start of a Turning Point"]

[Text] The October Offensive by the Nazi troops against Moscow had suffered a defeat. The main goals of Operation Typhoon to capture Moscow were not achieved. Regardless of the fact that the enemy had suffered serious losses, its forces were not exhausted. The commander of the Western Front the troops of which carried the main burden of defeating the Nazi troops at Moscow initiated rapid and decisive measures to repulse the new Nazi offensive against our motherland's capital.

Great attention was given to the engineer organization of the terrain for the forthcoming combat. Defensive positions were strengthened, antitank areas and strongpoints were equipped, zones of obstacles were established in the tactical and operational depth, defensive lines were constructed intensely and the troops were brought to high alert. By 25 November, just on the external perimeter of the Moscow Zone, they had built 1,428 permanent log-earth emplacements, 165 km of antitank trenches, 110 km of wire obstacles in three rows as well as other obstacles ("Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1975, p 105).

The new offensive against Moscow commenced on 15 November by Army Group Center, regardless of certain successes, again failed. The Nazi troops were bled white and deprived of offensive capability. Real conditions were established for a Soviet troop counteroffensive at Moscow.

The main role in defeating the enemy at Moscow was given over to the Western Front under the command of Army Gen G.K. Zhukov. The troops of the Kalinin Front as well as the right wing of the Southwestern Front were also involved in the counteroffensive.

On 30 November, the Western Front Military Council submitted to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief a plan elaborated by it for defeating the enemy at Moscow and this was approved.

On 5 December, the Kalinin Front and somewhat later the Western Front went over to the counteroffensive.

The first results of the Soviet troop counteroffensive at Moscow were summed up on 12 December.

The documents published show what efforts were made by the Soviet Command to repulse the new drive against Moscow. The counteroffensive vividly showed the tenacity of the command and the troops in carrying out the set tasks, the skillful tactics of conducting combat for strongpoints and centers of resistance and the ongoing pursuit of the enemy, the intelligent actions to seize enemy lines of communications deep in the defenses and attack in the flanks as well as the deep breakthroughs into the rear of the Nazi troops.

The experience gained in the course of the counteroffensive was widely employed in organizing and conducting other offensive operations carried out by the Soviet troops in the course of the Great Patriotic War.

The published documents are kept at the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense.

Report of the Military Council of the Western Front of 13 October 1941 to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on Destroying the Enemy Group Reaching the Area of Kalinin

By Direct [Wire]
Deliver Immediately

To Comrade Stalin

I report to you my ideas on destroying the enemy grouping which has reached Kalinin and on preventing its advance against Moscow:

1. During 14 and 15 October (1941) to hit this grouping with all the aviation of the High Command Reserve, with the aviation of the Northwestern Front and partially the aviation from the right group of the Western Front.
2. During these same days, units of the 5th Rifle Division, Khomenko's¹ units, worker and hunter detachments are to go on the defensive stubbornly on the outskirts of the city, preventing the enemy from capturing the city itself.

From the area of Bezborodov, where a motorcycle regiment and a reinforced rifle regiment are concentrated, from the morning of 14 October they are to move up into the area of Grodnaya, Mezhevo and from there commence an offensive on the axis of Salygino into the enemy flank.

Over a period of 2 days, a group is to be assembled consisting of four rifle divisions in the area of Staritsa, Gorki and from whence three of the rifle divisions are to launch a strike into the enemy rear on the general axis of Ryazanovo. The actions of this group are to be covered by one rifle division to the south.

Over a period of 2 days, the 8th Tank Brigade and one rifle division is to be moved up from the Southwestern Front into the Menoye area and a thrust launched through the city.

By the end of 14 October, a tank brigade from the High Command Reserve is to be moved up to the Zavidov area and from here a thrust is to be launched in cooperation with the aviation, the motorized rifle battalion and rifle battalion on the Salygino axis.

Start of operation is 16 October. Confirmation requested.

Zhukov

Bulganin

13 October 1941 TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 208, inv. 2511, file 1029, sheets 104-105 Original, signed by hand of G.K. Zhukov

**Directive of Western Front Military Council No. 0428
of 30 October 1941 to Troops of Front Concerning
Measures to Repulse Enemy Offensive Against Moscow**

To Commanders of 16th, 5th, 33d, 43d and 49th Armies, Air Force Commander, Artillery Chief, Engineer Chief and Deputy Commander for Rear

1. The enemy, in suffering heavy losses in personnel and equipment, over the last 3 days has moved up tanks, artillery and motorized units for organizing a new and decisive offensive. The offensive is expected over the next few days of 31 October-2 November (1941).

2. The task for the units of the Western Front over 31 October-1 November is to prepare a devastating greeting for the enemy and in the very first defensive battle deal the enemy such a defeat that would completely thwart its plans and subsequently create conditions for conducting a counterstrike by our troops.

3. I order:

For the following measures to be carried out immediately:

a) In establishing obstacles—to destroy all highways adjacent to the forward edge of our defenses and the highways which the enemy would use for its maneuvering in depth up to 100 km. The destruction is to be continuously maintained. All bridges are to be destroyed without fail. All likely tank approaches are to be mined with antitank mines and KS bottles.

On the possible directions of infantry assaults, they are to immediately organize wire obstacles, obstructions, barricades, antipersonnel minefields as well as prepare curtains of fire.

Barricades are to be built in all population points, using all available means up to housing, inclusively.

For creating curtains of fire, petroleum, kerosene, mazut and gasoline are to be brought up and prepared for quick ignition.

Traps are to be built on all sectors, the largest possible number of hedgehogs is to be set out, more booby traps are to be prepared and whenever possible flooding carried out.

Particular attention is to be paid to establishing antitank areas, having organized the following antitank areas without fail: Teryayeva Sloboda, Novo-Petrovskoye, Istra, Anufriyev, Lokotnya, Mikhaylovskoye, Zvenigorod, Dorokhovo, Kubinka, Akulovo, Murino Area, Tashirovo Area, Petrovskoye, Naro-Fominsk, Kamenka, Kresty, Stremilovo, Lopasnya, Serpukhov, Drakino, Vysokinicheskoye Sector, Shatovo and Kalugino.

All of the antitank weapons are to be in the antitank areas along with the antiartillery, air and antitank defenses, using primarily the antitank weapons and antitank grenades² and all artillery systems including any captured.

b) For protecting personnel against artillery and mortar fire, immediately the entire defenses are to be dug in deeply, having dug more shelters, various foxholes, slip trenches and communications trenches.

The battle formations are to be echeloned in depth, reserves are to be established without fail from the regimental commander on up, all rear services are to be moved further back and spread out.

c) Dependability of command is to be prepared, all wires are to be buried in the tactical zone and a portion of the courier service shifted to horses.

d) All questions of cooperation with aviation, tanks and artillery are to be carefully worked out.

e) Supporting the boundaries between the regiments, divisions and armies is to be worked out with particular care. For each boundary there are to be forces ensuring the reliability of the boundaries.

f) The tanks are to be positioned in depth behind the infantry in ambushes for firing on the enemy from the spot.

g) The chief of staff is to send out to all units artillery troops, engineers and operational workers to verify the execution of the current order. The personnel is to report to the military council.

3. The military councils of the armies in carrying out the current order are to immediately issue the necessary instructions and organize supervision over execution.

The plan of execution and supervision is to be reported to the military council by 0900 hours on 31 October.

Zhukov

Sokolovskiy

Bulganin

30 October 1941 TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 1029, sheets 249-253 Original, signed by hand of G.K. Zhukov

Order to Troops of Western Front No. 051

1 November 1941

A month has passed since the Nazi invaders have conducted their offensive. The Nazi hordes are straining every effort and are pushing fiercely to Moscow. The Western Front which has been given the historic task of defending Moscow is putting up heroic resistance to the enemy pressure.

In heavy, bloody fighting, in defending each inch of their homeland, their families, their children, fathers and mothers, in defending their freedom and independence, our troops are driving off this enemy thrust. Each step of advance costs enormous losses for the Germans.

Just from 12 through 30 October, at Mozhaysk, Maloyaroslavets, Volokolamsk and Naro-Fominsk, the Germans lost 20,000 killed and around 50,000 wounded. At the same time we hit and destroyed 289 German tanks, 198 aircraft and 142 guns and caused other losses. Regardless of the losses, the German band of Nazi villains, in being driven by the fear of the cold Russian winter, is continuing to advance and is endeavoring to complete its campaign to the East before the frosts and snows.

The cannibal Hitler, this bloody pogromist who has shed the blood of the people for his own temporary successes, on 2 October 1941 stated to his soldiers and to the German people that the offensive against Moscow is simultaneously the end of the war. By this lure of peace and the end of the war he has brazenly and boldly deceived his own Nazi band of butchers. He has deceived the German people. It has turned out differently. The offensive and lightning-like taking of Moscow was not an easy matter. Now Hitler, this ruler-cannibal, must wager everything to achieve the boldly promised "decisive success."

The Nazi scoundrels are going into battle counting on a winter respite, in counting on a "decisive success."

We must thwart these Nazi plans at a price of any effort.

Dear comrade Red Armymen, commanders and political workers.

The land and forests where you are now defending your home motherland with your bodies are stained with the sacred blood of our ancestors the struggle of whom has gone down in history in defeating the Napoleonic hordes.

It is our sacred duty not to allow the Nazi dogs to trod on our sacred earth.

The enemy's forces have been undercut and are exhausted but the enemy is still strong and is continuing to advance.

The Nazis who have suffered heavy casualties from your fire and bayonets in recent days have moved up human reserves. Ammunition and fuel are being moved up and there are preparations underway to go over to an offensive against Moscow.

We will be ready to meet the enemy in a Bolshevik manner, to rout its forces and once and for all get free of the encroachments on our capital.

Having thwarted the enemy's plans and having repelled its last offensive, we will not only prevent it from reaching Moscow but thereby predetermine our victory over Hitler. We will paralyze its tanks and aviation and we will force its personnel to shiver and perish in the harsh Russian winter. We will destroy it just as our ancestors destroyed Napoleon's Army.

Combat friends Red Armymen, commanders and political workers.

During these harsh days, the motherland, our people and our great Stalin have commanded all of us to defend the home and beloved Moscow. The motherland has entrusted us with the responsible and honorable task of becoming an unbreakable wall and block the path of the German hordes to our capital.

Not a step to the rear—this is the combat order of the motherland to us, the defenders of Moscow.

The front military council orders:

1. All the personnel and weapons are to be brought to full combat readiness, careful reconnaissance of the enemy is to be carried out and the security of our own flanks ensured.

2. The defensive is to be carried out as an active defensive combined with counterattacks. We should not wait for the enemy to attack. We ourselves must go over to counterattacks. The enemy is to be ground down by all measures.

3. Cowards and deserters are to be dealt with unmercifully, thereby ensuring the discipline and organization of our units. This our Stalin teaches us.

4. In these decisive battles for the motherland and for glorious Moscow, the troops of the Western Front, the formations and units of all the branches of arms³ should launch crushing blows against the Nazi hordes. The proud aces of Stalin's aviation, the glorious tank troops, artillerymen, mortar troops, infantrymen, cavalrymen, tank hunters, scouts, combat engineers and signal troops, the motherland expects from you an intrepid crushing of the enemy and glorious feats.

Comrades, friends, brothers!

We are the sons of the great Soviet people. We have been raised and indoctrinated by the party of Lenin—Stalin. Under its leadership for a quarter of a century we have built our lives, under its leadership in the terrible hour of danger, without sparing our forces or life itself, as a steel wall we will rise to the defense of the motherland, to the defense of its sacred capital Moscow.

To combat, dear comrades!

Let us avenge the Nazi scoundrels for the plundering and devastation of our towns and villages, for the violence against women and children! Blood for blood! Death for death! Let us completely destroy the enemy!

For our honor and freedom, for our motherland, for our sacred Moscow! Long live the Soviet people!

Long live the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the party of Lenin and Stalin, the organizer of the fight for the victory over the Nazi invaders.

Commander of Western Front Army Gen, Hero of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov Military Council Member of Western Front, Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of People's Commissars N.A. Bulganin

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2524, file 10, sheets 131-135
Original

**Directive of Western Front Military Council No. 0437
of 1 November 1941 to Commanders and Military
Council Members of 5th, 16th, 33d, 43d and 49th
Armies**

The Germans will commence their offensive with the mass employment of all types of fire against the forward edge of our defenses and against the artillery positions.

The enemy will spare no shells or ammunition for this.

In order not to suffer losses from the enemy fire and to check the offensive once and for all, our troops, in addition to the measures indicated in the order of the military council⁴ must organize the deception of the enemy.

I order:

To think out and immediately issue instructions to the troops on carrying out measures to deceive the enemy.

In particular:

1. To establish a false forward edge while the real forward edge should be 1-1.5 km behind the false one.
2. To establish a system of false firing positions.
3. To establish false artillery positions and using mock-ups a false tank grouping.
4. To establish minefields and by a skillful, previously thought-out maneuver to draw the enemy to the minefields and after the enemy has been blown up on the minefields, to attack it with bayonets and tanks.

Zhukov

Sokolovskiy

Bulganin

1 November 1941 TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 1029, sheet 266 Typed copy

Order to Troops of Western Front No. 061

5 November 1941

To the Military Councils of the 16th, 33d, 5th, 43d and 49th Armies

Among all the measures to prepare to repel the enemy, particular attention must be given to the complete combat readiness of the RS guards mortar [rocket] battalions.

The front military council obliges you to immediately and carefully check the state of the RS rocket units. They are to be brought to complete combat readiness: technical malfunctions are to be eliminated, fuel and ammunition are to be prepared and kept in necessary amounts. Firing positions are to be readied, observation is to be organized and personnel is to be instructed. Report on the measures taken.

Zhukov

Bulganin

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 1029, sheet 303 Typed copy

**From the Report of the Western Front Political
Directorate to the Chief of the Main Political
Directorate of the Red Army**

7 November 1941

Yesterday in a number of the front's subunits, where the situation permitted, meetings and talks were held devoted to the 24th anniversary of October.

Hundreds of soldiers and commanders voiced their unanimous determination to defeat the advancing enemy more quickly.

The entire party and political apparatus of the units and formations explained to the personnel the results of the distance traveled over the 24 years and the tasks of today.

During 6 November, the troops of the front continued to strengthen the defensive line and on individual sectors conducted an offensive. The enemy in the Dorokhovo and Kaluga area had concentrated large panzer and infantry forces. During the day the front's air forces made 426 aircraft sorties and bombed and strafed the troop accumulations in the area of Volokolamsk—Ryukhovskoye, Dorokhovo—Mozhaysk, Panino—Maloyaroslavets, Ruza and Kaluga. As a result, they destroyed and put out of commission 13-15 aircraft, 60 tanks, 200 motor vehicles, 30 wagons, 15 guns, 2 tank cars, an ammunition dump, a mortar battery and the staff of the XII Army Corps in the Rakhmanovo area was dispersed.

The personnel of the front's units live for one idea and one aspiration—to drive off the Nazi thrust, to defeat the enemy on the approaches to Moscow. In the course of the fighting, each day there are new heroes born and new facts of courage and valor.

The political instructor of the 6th Rifle Company of the 6th Guards Motorized Regiment, Comrade A.D. Tsitsora (killed 9 November 1941) on 23 October in the fighting for Naro-Fominsk with his platoon became separated from the company, he headed it and continued to carry out the battle task. Comrade Tsitsora with the platoon made its way to the center of the town, drove the Germans out of a building, occupied it and for 8 days continued fighting, destroying the German invaders. The platoon destroyed the crew of one tank and several groups of German soldiers trying to reach the tank. The men of the platoon destroyed submachine gunners who were moving into the houses and streets. During the morning of 1 November, Comrade Tsitsora led the platoon of 30 men out of the town and linked up with his unit.

The scouts of the 12th Rifle Regiment of the 53d Rifle Division (43d Army) headed by Capt, Comrade Ryzhikh acted with exceptional decisiveness and boldness. In the area of the village of Kolontay, during the night the scouts broke into the position of the enemy dugouts, threw grenades at them and destroyed up to 20 German soldiers, taking one prisoner.

The company master sergeant from the 93d Rifle Division, the party organizer, Comrade Vasilyev, pulled a German soldier (81st Infantry Regiment of the 15th Infantry Division) out of a foxhole and captured him.

Remarkable fighting qualities were shown by the 3d Company of the 24th Mortar Battalion (43d Army). In

subsequent fighting this company repulsed two German assaults, destroying up to a company of Nazis in this. The platoon of the commander, Comrade Semenenko behaved courageously. Regardless of the strong enemy artillery fire against the firing position, not one of the men flinched and the platoon continued sending one shell after another against the advancing enemy infantry until the latter was put to flight....

Deputy Chief of Western Front
Political Directorate
Brig Commissar I. Ganenko

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 22, sheets 103-104
Copy

Combat Leaflet of Unit of Col Katukov

Long Live the 24th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution Which Overthrew the Power of the Imperialists in Our Nation and Proclaimed Peace Between Peoples of the Entire World!

(From the slogans of the VKP(b)
[All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)]
Central Committee)

Yesterday evening at a ceremonial plenum of the Moscow City Soviet, a speech was given by the Chairman of the State Defense Committee [GKO], Comrade Stalin. Greeted by those assembled with exceptional enthusiasm and admiration, the leader of the peoples made an analysis of the nation's military situation and called upon the Red Army and all the people to fight until the complete destruction of Naziism. Comrade Stalin completed his speech with the words:

"The enemy will be routed! Victory will be ours!"

To the leader's appeal let us respond with new heroic feats for the glory of our beloved fatherland! Let us destroy the Nazi occupiers! Let us defend the heart of our motherland, Moscow! Forward against the enemy!

Meeting of Soldiers With Workers

Yesterday our unit was visited by a delegation of workers from Krasnogvardeyskiy Rayon of Moscow. The delegation turned over gifts from the Moscow workers to the unit's soldiers, commanders and political workers. A meeting was held in the unit of the battalion commissar Comrade Komlov at which the shop head from the Kominintern Plant spoke. She said: "The workers of Moscow are making every effort to defend Moscow along

with the Red Army and defeat Naziism." In the reply, the Sr Btlm Commissar Boyko stated: "The Nazi executioners will never see Moscow!"

A Gift to the Motherland

Recently the crew of Sr Sgt Shestoperov under the command of Lt Korovyanskiy went out on reconnaissance. In one of the villages in the enemy positions, the women informed the tank troops that the enemy was in the neighboring village. Having spotted the Nazis, the tank troops engaged them in battle and destroyed two heavy armored vehicles, having captured a radio, staff documents, a machine gun and ammunition. On the day of the 24th anniversary of October, we vow to add to our combat successes and defeat Naziism! Victory figures: in the fighting against the Nazi occupiers the unit personnel destroyed 8 aircraft, 150 tanks, 37 heavy and light guns and up to 2 infantry regiments. To the appeal of Comrade Stalin and the Central Committee we are responding with new combat deeds!

Red Army tank troops boldly destroy the enemy! No quarter to the Nazi scoundrels! Long live the Soviet tank troops!

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 46, sheet 400 Original

Order to the Troops of the Western Front No. 60 of 17 November 1941 on the Occasion of the 24th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution

Comrade Red Armymen, commanders and political workers!

Today marks the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Some 24 years ago our people under the leadership of the party of Lenin and Stalin overthrew the power of the imperialists in our nation and proclaimed peace among the peoples of the entire world.

The Soviet people are greeting their 24th anniversary of the great holiday in a complicated and tense situation.

German Naziism—this bloody band of the basest imperialists—has invaded our country. The Nazi villains want to seize our factories and plants, our land and our bread, to restore the power of the landowners and turn us into the slaves of the German princes and barons.

The savage German hordes intoxicated with blood and the thirst for plunder are pushing toward the heart of our nation, the pride and sacred citadel of our state, Moscow.

During these terrible days, we, the soldiers of the Western Front, have been given the greatest historical mission of defending Moscow.

To shatter the plans of the Nazi curs and to put a beginning to the defeat of Hitlerism—this terrible plague of the 20th Century which threatens the freedom, happiness and peace of all mankind.

Valorous defenders of Moscow! The Western Front Military Council congratulates you on the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and expresses firm conviction that you will honorably carry out the task of the sacred struggle against German invaders.

The moment has come when all forces, all willpower and all determination must be gathered together in order with our very bodies to defend the victories of October inscribed in gold letters in Stalin's Constitution.

Do not let the enemy through to Moscow! Do not allow the Nazi bandits to defile the sacred streets of our mother capital!

Not one step to the rear, comrades! Let us celebrate the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution with a mighty blow against the enemy.

Long live the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution! Long live our beloved motherland! Long live the party of Lenin and Stalin! Long live our great leader and general, Comrade Stalin!

Commander of Western Front, Army General, Hero of the Soviet Union, G.K. Zhukov Member of Front Military Council,
Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of People's Commissars, N. Bulganin

TsAMO, folio 3467, inv. 1, file 1, sheet 131 Typed copy

Explanatory Note of the Western Front Military Council of 30 November 1941 to USSR People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin on the Map Plan for the Moscow Counteroffensive

1. The start of the offensive, proceeding from the dates for the unloading and concentration of the troops and their bringing up to strength:

For the 1st Assault, 20th and 16th Armies and Golikov's⁵ army from the morning of 3-4 December and for the 30th Army, 5-6 December.

2. The strength of the armies, according to the directives of Headquarters and the individual units and formations fighting on the front in the zones of advance of the armies are as indicated on the map.

3. The immediate task: by an attack on Klin—Solnechnogorsk and on the Istra axis to defeat the main enemy grouping on the right wing and by a thrust against Uzlovaya and Bogoroditsk in the flank and rear of Guderian's grouping, to defeat the enemy on the left wing of the front of Western Front armies.

4. In order to tie down the enemy forces on the remaining front and deprive it of the opportunity to shift forces, the 5th, 33d, 43d, 49th and 50th Armies of the front by 4-5 December are to go over to an offensive with limited tasks.

5. The main air grouping (3/4) will be aimed at cooperating with the right assault grouping while the remainder will work with the left, the army of Lt Gen Golikov.

Zhukov Sokolovskiy Bulganin

30 November 1941 Resolution. "Approved. I.V. Stalin"

TsAMO, folio 28, inv. 11627, file 988a, sheets 2-3
Original, in hand of G.K. Zhukov

**Report of the Western Front Military Council of 12
December 1941 to Headquarters Supreme High
Command on Combat Operations of the Front From 16
November Through 10 December 1941**

From 16 November 1941, the German troops, having released 13 panzer, 33 infantry and 5 motorized divisions against the Western Front, began a second general offensive against Moscow.

The enemy was aiming by an outflanking and simultaneous deep envelopment of the front's flanks, to come out in our rear and surround Moscow.

For this the following forces were concentrated:

—Against our right wing on the Klin—Solnechnogorsk axis—the 3d and 4th Panzer Groups of Gens Gooth and Hupner and including the 1st, 2d, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th and 11th Tank Divisions, the 36th and 14th Motorized Infantry Divisions and the 23d, 106th and 35th Infantry Divisions;

—Opposite [our] left flank on the Stalinogorsk—Venev—Kashira axis—the 2d Panzer Army of Gen Guderian including the 3d, 4th, 17th and 18th Panzer Divisions, the 10th and 29th Motorized Infantry Divisions and the 167th Infantry Division;

—Fighting in the center and opposite Tula were the IX, VII, XX, XII, XIII and XLIII Army Corps and the 19th and 20th Panzer Divisions.

Prior to 6 December, the troops of the front were conducting a fierce defensive engagement, checking the advance of the enemy assault flanking groups and repelling its auxiliary strikes on the Istra, Zvenigorod and Naro-Fominsk axes.

In the course of this fighting the enemy suffered significant losses.

...On 6 December 1941, the troops of the front, having ground down the enemy in previous fighting, went over to a decisive counteroffensive against its assault flanking groups.

As a result of the commenced offensive, both these groupings were defeated and hurriedly retreated, abandoning equipment, weapons and suffering enormous losses.

By the end of 11 December 1941:

—The 30th Army of Gen Lelyushenko, in pursuing the enemy 1st Panzer Division, the 14th and 36th Motorized Infantry Division, surrounded Klin.

—The 1st Army of Gen Kuznetsov seized Yakhroma and, pursuing the retreating enemy 6th and 7th Panzer Divisions and the 23d Infantry Division, reached the Leningrad Highway.

—The 20th Army...in pursuing the enemy 2d Panzer Division and 106th Infantry Division, captured Solnechnogorsk.

—The 16th Army of Gen Rokossovskiy, in pursuing the enemy 5th, 10th and 11th Panzer Division, an SS division and the 25th Infantry Division, captured Istra.

—The 5th Army of Gen Govorov breached the defenses of the enemy 252d, 87th, 78th and 267th Infantry Divisions and was continuing an offensive on the general axis of Novo-Petrovskoye, Ruza.

—The 50th Army of Gen Boldin, having defeated the enemy 3d and 4th Panzer Divisions and a SS Regiment (Grosse Deutschland) to the northeast of Tula, has continued to advance to the south, squeezing and enveloping the enemy 296th Infantry Division.

—The I Guards Cavalry Corps of Maj Belov has successively defeated the enemy 17th Panzer Division, the 29th Motorized Infantry Division and the 167th Infantry Division, and in pursuing their remnants, captured Venev and Stalinogorsk.

—The 10th Army of Gen Golikov, having driven the units of the 18th Tank Division, the 10th and 15th Motorized Infantry Divisions to the southwest, captured Mikhaylov and Yepifan Station.

After going over to the offensive, from 6 through 10 December 1941, the units of our troops occupied and liberated over 400 population points from the Germans.

...German losses for just the above-indicated armies over this time are over 85,000 killed.

...The pursuit and destruction of the retreating German troops are continuing.

Zhukov

Bulganin

12 December 1941

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 1029, sheets 332-334
Typed copy

**Order to the Troops of the 16th Army No. 44 of 31
December 1941 on the Occasion of Celebrating the New
Year of 1942**

Comrade soldiers, commanders and political workers!

At present our Soviet people, fully determined to destroy the bloody band of German occupiers who have invaded our territory, is celebrating the new year of 1942.

The Armed Forces of our people and our motherland—the Red Army and Red Navy—have celebrated the start of the new year of 1942 with crushing and mighty blows against the enemy, having liberated from the Nazi occupiers hundreds of villages and towns, including Rostov, Klin, Tikhvin, Kalinin, Yelets, Kerch, Feodosiya and Kaluga.

By the mighty blow of our army's units, the perfidious and base enemy has been thrown back from Moscow and under the unabating pressure of our troops continues to retreat farther and farther.

The German curs are marking the route of their retreat with enormous losses in equipment and personnel.

Nothing can any longer halt the offensive drive of our troops. Inspired by the single desire to carry out the instructions of the leader of the peoples and our people's commissar of defense, Comrade Stalin, to annihilate to the last man all the German occupiers who have broken into our Soviet land, the soldiers, commanders and political workers are boldly engaging the enemy, they are shattering its resistance and are forcing it into panic flight.

The army military council congratulates the soldiers, commanders and political workers on the new year of 1942 and expresses the firm conviction that along with all of the nation and along with all the Armed Forces of our great motherland, our army's units will make 1942 a year of the final defeat and destruction of the Nazi hordes thrown by Hitler into the territory of our motherland for plunder, violence and murder.

Death to the German occupiers!

Forward, to the liberation of our land from the Nazi villains!

Do not allow the enemy one hour of rest! Catch up to and exterminate it without quarter!

Long live our glorious motherland, its freedom and its independence!

Long live great Stalin!

Commander of 16th Army, Army Military Council Member,
Lt Gen Rokossovskiy Divisional Commissar Lobachev
Army Chief of Staff,
Maj Gen Malinin

TsAMO, folio 3467, inv. 1, file 1, sheet 261 Typed copy

Footnotes

1. Major General, Commander of the 30th Army.
2. As such in the directive.
3. As such in the order.
4. See the Directive of the Western Front Military Council No. 0428 of 30 October 1941.
5. Lt Gen F.I. Golikov, commander of the 10th Army.

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They Fought to the Last Man...

00010006b Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 89 (signed to press
29 Dec 88) pp 25-38

[Archival materials compiled by G.N. Vzvarova and N.M. Yemelyanova, senior science associates at the USSR TsAMO: "They Fought to the Last Man..."]

[Text] On 16 November 1941, the Nazi troops commenced the second offensive against Moscow in the aim of outflanking the Western Front to the flanks and, coming out in the rear of the Soviet armies, to surround the capital of our motherland.

On one of the flanks, in the area of Klin—Solnechnogorsk, the Nazi Command threw the greatest forces into the offensive, including: the 25th, 35th, 106th and 252d Infantry Divisions, a SS Division, the 36th and 14th Motorized Divisions, the 1st, 2d, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th and 11th Panzer Divisions of the group of Gens Gooth and Hupner. On the other flank, in the area of Stalino—Venev, on the offensive were: the 167th Infantry Division, the 10th and 29th Motorized Divisions, the regiment Grosse Deutschland and the 3d, 4th and 17th Panzer Divisions of the 2d Panzer Army of Gen Guderian.¹

In defending each meter of their territory, the troops of the Western Front from 16 November through 6 December carried out fierce defensive battles. Many formations of the front put out stubborn resistance to the enemy,

including the 316th Rifle Division of Maj Gen I.V. Panfilov. For valor in combat, for steadfastness, courage and heroism shown by all its men, on 18 November 1941, the division became the 8th Guards Rifle Division and subsequently it was awarded the name of its killed commander, Hero of the Soviet Union I.V. Panfilov.²

During the difficult days for all the Soviet people in November 1941, the division repulsed massed assaults by superior enemy forces pushing toward Moscow along the Volokolamsk Highway. The Nazi tanks were approaching the capital from different directions in the division's defensive zone. But none of the division's soldiers flinched before them. At Dubosekovo Siding, the Nazis were stopped by a small handful of soldiers. Their names are now known to the entire world. These were the 28 hero infantrymen from the 1075th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division headed by the Jr Polit Instr V.G. Klochkov-Diyev. Their images have been perpetuated in songs, poems and stories, in marble and in paint.

But there are few who know about the feat of the other men from this division and who stopped the second enemy tank column endeavoring to outflank the division from the rear.

The story was as follows. The 1077th Rifle Regiment was engaged in exhaustive fighting against the Nazi invaders, occupying the defensive in the area of Avdotino, Yefremovo, Maleyevka. But the forces were unequal and on 16 November 1941, the Nazis breached the defenses of one of the subunits on the left flank and reached the rear of the regiment and its staff located in the village of Strokovo. From the village of Golubtsovo already occupied by 7 enemy tanks and submachine gunners into the rear of the regiment's defenses and from the direction of Bykovo, Yefremovo toward Strokovo, the enemy carried out an offensive with 20 tanks and infantry (up to a battalion) from the rear, flank and head on, opening up heavy fire from the tanks, mortars and machine guns. The regiment's battalions, in being confronted with superior enemy forces and in driving off its numerous assaults, was forced to retreat to previously prepared lines. The only road along which the regiment could retreat could be fired on from tanks and was covered by enemy mortar and artillery fire. A group of combat engineers under the command of Jr Lt Firstov was assigned the task of covering this road and preventing a breakthrough by the enemy tanks and infantry.

The 11 soldiers, having taken up the defensive on the outskirts of the village of Strokovo, vowed not to let the Nazis pass, to hold them up, to provide an opportunity for the regiment to retreat and take up a good line. Ten of the combat engineers³ perished in the unequal battle having honorably carried out the mission. Here are their names: Jr Lt Petr Ivanovich Firstov, Jr Polit Instr Aleksy Mikhaylovich Pavlov, the combat engineers Petr Petrovich Geniyevskiy, Yerofey Antonovich Dovzhuk, Aleksandr Nikolayevich Zubkov, Prokofiy Grigoryevich

Kalyuzhnyy, Vasilii Ivanovich Manoshin,⁴ Daniil Konstantinovich Materkin, Vasilii Ivanovich Semenov and Pavel Iosifovich Sinegovskiy. Their bodies were discovered only on 2 June 1942 by soldiers from the 2d Rifle Battalion of the 129th Rifle Brigade of the VIII Guards Rifle Corps 1 km to the northeast of the village of Strokovo, Volokolamskiy Rayon, in a water-filled dug-out.

On 3 June 1942, the Soviet soldiers who had been ferociously tortured by the Nazis were buried. Participating in the funerals were the inhabitants of the village of Strokovo and the entire personnel of the 129th Rifle Brigade. The motherland had high praise for the feat of the 11 guardsmen combat engineers. They were awarded the Order of Lenin (Posthumously).

This is the only occasion in the entire war when such a large group of combat engineers was awarded a high governmental decoration. On 31 October 1981, on the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Moscow, at km 114 of the Volokolamsk Highway, the monument "Explosion" (designer, architect A. Veselovskiy) was opened up for the heroes: an enemy self-propelled gun is exploding by the trenches of our defenses and by it are the shattered track links and barrel of a cannon. The explosion has been rendered with three architectural elements made from stainless steel. The monument has been faced with red Urals granite. At the center of a granite slab is an eternal flame. In the settlement of Nakhabino in Krasnogorskiy Rayon of Moscow Oblast a street has been named after the heroes.⁵

The given publication provides documents showing the intensity of the fighting on 16-18 November 1941 and disclosing the facts of the heroism and death of the 11 guardsmen combat engineers from the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division. The documents are placed in chronological order. A portion of them has been abridged. The given documents are published here for the first time.

Order of the Commander of the 316th Rifle Division No. 19

6 November 1941

Comrade soldiers, commander, political workers! Our Soviet people and the Red Army are greeting the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in a tense situation. The enemy is making its last efforts and is endeavoring to break through to our capital, Moscow.

During the first days of the war the Nazi bandits had succeeded in forcing back our units. But this advance has been purchased at a dear price as the Nazi dogs on our sector of the front had lost: 153 tanks damaged and burned up, up to 100 guns and mortars destroyed, up to 9,000 Nazi soldiers and officers killed and wounded. The fear of the Nazi evil-doers of a drawn out, protracted war and the fear of a harsh Russian winter drove them into

the offensive. The Nazi leaders, disregarding the enormous losses, continued to push forward and are throwing the last reserves into the war. The Nazi rulers are wagering everything if only to achieve a decisive success before the winter, if only to reach our Moscow.

Comrade soldiers, commanders, political workers! We are entering the time of the most serious and intense fighting for Moscow. The enemy will endeavor to breach our defenses and for this he is throwing in new forces....

Before us, soldiers, commanders and political workers of the Volokolamsk sector, before all the soldiers defending the approaches to Moscow now stands the greatest historical task of holding out against this new pressure of the Nazi hordes and to meet them with iron tenacity, courage and self-sacrifice. Not a step to the rear!

It is essential that each soldier, commander and political worker of our division, in defending the lines on the approaches to Moscow, that they all be aware of the great historical significance of the battle for the capital. By the stubborn and active defense of Moscow it is essential to shatter and turn to dust the plans of the Nazi gang. Having defended Moscow, we will further undermine the enemy rear and will worsen the morale of the German troop rear services. By bold counterstrikes and by rapid countermaneuvers we must wear down, exhaust, bleed white the Nazi armor and bury the new German divisions on the lands around Moscow.

By the courageous defense of the beloved mother Moscow, we will show the way to victory for our troops holding out on the other fronts of the Great Patriotic War.

At present and in the future our people will recall with pride the names of Capt Manayenko, Capt Lysenko, Maj Gausburg and Commissar Anashkin who fought like lions and defended Moscow and fell a death of the brave. Eternal memory for the heroes!

The division is proud of its brave, intrepid soldiers and commanders such as Red Armyman Krivenko, Maj Shekhman and Sr Polit Instr Korsakov who on the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War have dealt a major defeat to the German hordes.

At present, the life of each soldier, commander and political worker holding out on the approaches to Moscow belongs to our motherland. We know that the fighting will be fierce and will require sacrifice. But Moscow, this great city which has grown up in the storms of combat and which has carried its immortal glory through the centuries, is afraid of no hardships, no sacrifices and no harsh battles.

The enemy is making its way to our heart, Moscow, and we must fight the Nazi hordes sparing no effort and going into battle with a determination to win or die. Not a step to the rear! This is the battle order of the motherland to us, the defenders of Moscow.

I congratulate the soldiers, commanders, political workers on their proletarian holiday, the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution!

Long live the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution!

Long live the Red Army and Navy which are heroically defending the freedom and life of the Soviet peoples against the Nazi invaders!

Death to the Nazi bloody dogs which are endeavoring to enslave and plunder the peoples of the Soviet Union!

Let us avenge the Nazi villains for the plundering and devastation of our cities and villages, for the violence to women and children! Blood for blood! Death for death!

Long live the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the party of Lenin and Stalin and the organizer of the fight for victory over the Nazi invaders!

Long live our wise, unbowed people's commissar of defense, great Stalin!

Commander of 316th Division, Maj Gen Panfilov	Chief of Staff, Col Serebryakov	Divisional Military Commissar, Sr Btlm Commissar Yegorov
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TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 4, sheets 5-5 (verso)
Original

**From the Battle Order of the Staff of the 316th Rifle
Division, No. 015**

18 November 1941

The enemy during the day of 17 November 1941 with tanks and infantry has continued to exploit the offensive on the axis of Golubtsovo, Chentsy, Shishkino. By the end of 17 November, it had captured these points....

The 1077th Rifle Regiment with the second company of the 857th Rifle Regiment, three tanks from the 58th Tank Division is to stubbornly defend the sector: Popovkino, elev. 226.7, Yefremovo, Strokovo, having the forward edge along the Chernaya River.

Commander of 316th Rifle Division
Maj Gen Panfilov

TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 9, sheet 95 Original

**Battle Report From Commander of 1077th Rifle
Regiment of 316th Rifle Division to Commander of
316th Rifle Division**

18 November 1941

The enemy continues to surround with tanks (10) Yefremovo (20) on Strokovo—Sitnikovo 4 tanks. Your decision essential promptly. Tanks have also approached Strokovo and Maleyevka.

Commander of 1077th Rifle Regiment
Maj Shekhtman

TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 9, sheet 95 Original

**Battle Report of Commander of 316th Rifle Division to
Commander of 16th Army of Western Front**

0630 hours

18 November 1941

With insignificant forces I am holding the following areas: Popovkino, elev. 226.7; Yefremovo, Strokovo with the 1077th Rifle Regiment, 50 percent of its strength. Amelfino with a battalion of the 1073d Rifle Regiment, 200 bayonets; the railroad junction, elev. 233.4 with the 1075th Rifle Regiment, 250 bayonets with an artillery battery; the station of Matrenino, Goryuny with antitank artillery, 4 tanks, a battalion of the 1073d Rifle Regiment, 50 percent of its strength. My reserve: an obstacle building detachment with 1050 bayonets. The 690th Rifle Regiment at 40 percent of its strength is breaking out of an encirclement from the forests in the Chentsy area. The area of Golubtsovo, Lystsevo, Shishkino, Rozhdestvenno is occupied by the enemy of up to a regiment of infantry and 50 tanks. Not enough forces to occupy Golubtsovo, Lystsevo, Shishkino. Request confirmation of the strongpoints held by me.

Commander of 316th Rifle Division
Maj Gen Panfilov

TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 6, sheets 39-39(verso)
Original

**Appeal of the Commander of the 16th Army to the
Soldiers, Commanders, Political Workers of the 8th
Guards Rifle Division**

19 November 1941

Dear Friends! During these days of great hardship, you have suffered a major loss as your commander has fallen in a death of the brave on the battlefield.

This is a grievous loss, but the enemies have miscalculated, it has not brought panic to your ranks but has forced you to rally even closer for a merciless struggle against the hated enemy. For the death of our commander the German bands should pay in thousands of their lives.

Let us avenge the German invaders and murderers, let us destroy the poisonous vile creature!

Let the right memory of your commander remain always in your hearts and let it serve as a source of even greater hate for the evil enemy.

Rokossovskiy

Lobachev

TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 4, sheet 7 Original

**From the Political Report of the Commissar of the
1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division to
the Commissar of the 8th Guards Rifle Division⁶**

20 November 1941

During 20 November, the regiment has been heavily engaged with the enemy. The enemy along the entire sector of the front during the entire day, under the cover of tanks and armored vehicles, has endeavored to infiltrate into the villages held by us. But having encountered stubborn resistance, it has always abandoned its attempts and has rolled back....

Exceptional bravery and valor in the fighting have been shown by the political workers on 18 November. The political instructor of the combat engineer company Comrade Pavlov with a platoon of soldiers for 5 hours held up an enemy company and perished heroically with the platoon, covering the retreat of the other subunits.

Commissar of the 1077th Rifle Regiment
Sr Polit Instr Korsakov

TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 9, sheets 77-79 Original

**Statement on Detecting Dugout With Corpses of Red
Army Servicemen 1 km to the Northeast of the Village
of Strokovo, Volokolamskiy Rayon of Moscow Oblast**

3 June 1942

We, the below-signed, military procurator of the 129th Separate Brigade, Military Lawyer A.T. Borisovets, Senior Instructor of the Political Section, Sr Polit Instr G.Ye. Simonyants, Political Section Instructors, Jr Polit Instr A.A. Frolov and I.P. Zhulin, Military Physicians 3d Rank Ye. N. Krasnyy and D.P. Slyusarev, Jr Polit Instr N.G. Filatov, Red Armymen A.Ya. Sychev and V.S. Yakovlev, inhabitants of the village of Strokovo, Volokolamskiy Rayon in Moscow Oblast, kolkhoz members: L.A. Dedumova and K.Ye. Kachalova have compiled

the current statement that we, some 1 km to the north-east of the village of Strokovo, detected a dugout in which there were ten corpses of servicemen.

As a result of the inspection of the corpses by the commission as well as the stories of village inhabitants, the following was established:

1. On 18 November 1941, when the Germans were pushing toward Moscow and our units were forced to retreat, ten Soviet soldiers headed by the political instructor Aleksey Fedorovich Pavlov who prior to mobilization lived in the city of Alma Ata, Issyk-Kulskaya Street 98, and a junior lieutenant the name of whom could not be established, [the group included] also Red Armyman Petr Petrovich Geniyevskiy who had lived in the city of Alma Ata, 17th Line, No. 152, Red Armyman Vasilii Ivanovich Semenov who had lived in Kirghizia, Frunze Oblast, Stalinskiy Rayon, Kushtybinskiy (Bolshevik Kolkhoz) and six Red Armymen the names of whom it was impossible to establish, covered the retreat of our units. Being severely wounded, [the men] continued to fight the enemy tanks and infantry. They hit two tanks and destroyed nine Nazis. Only when a portion of them had been killed and a portion severely wounded did the Nazis succeed in capturing them.

2. On the basis of the evidence of the inhabitants in the village of Strokovo, L.A. Nedumova and K.Ye. Kachalova, the medical examination by Physicians 3d Rank Ye.N. Krasnyy and D.P. Slyusarev was it established that the Germans had cruelly tortured [the prisoners] and desecrated the corpses of the slain men. In Polit Instr A.F. Pavlov, his skull had been split by a blade and there was a kick to his throat. Red Armyman P.P. Geniyevskiy had cuts on his upper lip and nose, and Red Armyman V.I. Semenov in the area of his right temple had a lacerated flat wound caused by a blunt instrument and in the anterior chest cavity 12 bullet wounds from a submachine gun. In a Red Armyman the name of whom could not be established, the nose, upper lip and ears had been cut off, and in the area of the right back of the head, a bayonet wound. In the junior lieutenant whose name could not be established, the head and right forearm were missing, the right hand and left leg were smashed. In the remainder the names of whom could not be established, the following injuries were detected: in one the left chin was broken, in a second the skull had been shattered, in a third there was a laceration wound in the area of the heart, in a fourth the right eye had been dug out and the skull crushed and the cheek cut out in the fifth.

3. The clothing on the cadavers had been torn. The footwear, with the exception of one Red Armyman wearing boots, had been removed. We did not discover any documents, papers, money or any other articles, with the exception of two identification tags of Geniyevskiy and Semenov.

4. From the stories of local inhabitants, the Germans and Finns cruelly tortured the wounded Red Armymen and commanders. They threw junior lieutenant severely wounded in the leg onto the road forbidding the population to go up to him. In response to a request to provide help, a Finn went up, removed his belt, put it in a loop on the neck of the junior lieutenant, a German stood on the legs of the wounded and in front of the population strangled him. Then he threw [him] on the roadway, prohibiting the corpse from being removed. Over a long period of time, the corpse of the junior lieutenant lay on the road and motor vehicles and carts road over it as a result of which the head and right forearm were cut off and the hand and right foot were crushed.

5. The corpses were found by the men of the battalion where Sr Polit Instr Pomogayev is the commissar and they were buried in a fraternal grave on the southeastern edge of the village of Strokovo by the school on 3 June 1942. Participating in the funeral were units of the 129th Separate Rifle Brigade from the VIII Guards Rifle Corps and inhabitants of the village of Strokovo.

The current act is compiled as evidence. 3 June 1942

Statement signed by: Senior Procurator and Military Lawyer Borisovets; Senior Instructor of the Political Section, Sr Polit Instr Simonyants, Political Section Instructor, Jr Polit Instrs Frolov, Zhulin; Military Physicians 3d Rank Krasnyy, Slyusarev; Jr Polit Instr Filatov; Red Armymen Sychev, Yakovlev; Kolkhoz members Nedumova, Kachalova.

Signatures verified by: Chief of the Political Section of the 129th Separate Rifle Brigade, Btlm Commissar Nevolin, Chairman of the Rural Soviet (signature)

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 264, sheets 13-14 Copy

From the Political Report of the Political Section of the 8th Guards Rifle Division to the Chief of the Political Section of the 16th Army of the Western Front

21 November 1941

During the offensive of the Nazi bands from 16 November 1941, the division has been heavily engaged with the enemy, destroying its personnel and tanks. In just one day of fighting, the 1077th Rifle Regiment using all its weapons hit and burned up 21 enemy tanks as well as several infantry companies with materiel....

Commissar of the 8th Guards Rifle Division
Sr Btlm Commissar Yegorov

TsAMO, folio 1063, inv. 1, file 100, sheets 167-168
Original

**Letter of Political Section Chief of 8th Guards Rifle
Division to Wife of Red Armyman Petr Petrovich
Geniyevskiy, Mariya Andreyevna Geniyevskaya**

3 June 1942
Alma Ata, 17th Line, No. 152
To Mariya Andreyevna Geniyevskaya

The soldiers, commanders and political workers of the unit of Col Ladygin with sorrow and hate for the Nazi butchers inform you of the death of your husband, Red Armyman Petr Petrovich Geniyevskiy.

Your husband was brutally tortured by the Nazi plunderers. He steadfastly endured the torture and died, without saying a word to the damned tyrants. He died in Moscow lands and he gave up his life for Moscow and for the motherland.

Be the same as your husband was!

We buried him on 3 June 1942 in a fraternal grave in the village of Strokovo, Volokolamskiy Rayon of Moscow Oblast. We vowed to avenge the German bandits for your husband. Death for death, blood for blood.

Eternal glory for the courageous soldier! Death to the German occupiers!

Upon authorization of the soldiers, commanders and political workers, the letter is signed

Political Section Chief,
Btln Commissar Nevolin

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 264, sheet 17 Copy

**Letter From Political Section Chief of 8th Guards Rifle
Division to Wife of Red Armyman Vasilii Ivanovich
Semenov, Anna Malofeyevna Semenova**

3 June 1942
Kirkhizia, Frunze Oblast, Stalinskiy Rayon Kustybinskiy, Volshevik Kolkhoz
To Anna Malofeyevna Semenova

The soldiers, commanders and political workers of the unit of Col Ladygin with sorrow and hate for the Nazi butchers inform you of the death of your husband, Vasilii Ivanovich Semenov.

Red Armyman, Comrade Semenov, perished in defending the motherland. The Nazi obscurantists tortured him brutally but he did not give away state secrets. He died in Moscow lands and he gave up his life for Moscow and for the motherland.

Be the same as your husband was!

We buried him on 3 June 1942 in a fraternal grave in the village of Strokovo, Volokolamskiy Rayon of Moscow

Oblast. We have vowed to avenge the Nazi villains for your husband, Red Armyman, Comrade Semenov. Death for death, blood for blood.

Eternal glory for the courageous soldier! Death to the German occupiers!

Upon authorization of the soldiers, commanders and political workers, the letter is signed

Political Section Chief,
Btln Commissar Nevolin

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 264, sheet 17 Copy

**Letter From Political Section Chief of 8th Guards Rifle
Division to the Mother of Jr Polit Instr Aleksey
Fedorovich* Pavlov to Mariya Osipovna Pavlova**

3 June 1942
Alma Ata, Issyk-Kulskaya Street 98
To Mariya Osipovna Pavlova

The soldiers, commanders and political workers of the unit of Col Ladygin with sorrow and hate for the Nazi butchers inform you of the death of your son, Aleksey Fedorovich Pavlov.

During the difficult days for the nation, when the German hordes were rushing toward our capital, Moscow, your son, Polit Instr Aleksey Fedorovich Pavlov, courageously repulsed the attacks of the Nazis. Being wounded, he together with a handful of soldiers and among whom were his fellow countrymen, did not leave the battlefield but continued courageously and bravely, to the last cartridge to repulse the fierce enemy assaults.

The German butchers captured your son severely wounded. Your son was brutally tortured by the Nazis. They tortured him but the courageous Soviet political worker remained a faithful son of his people until his last breath. He died without having divulged military secrets. He died on Moscow land and he gave up his life for Moscow, for the motherland.

Be the same as your son!

We buried him in a fraternal grave on 3 June 1942 in the village of Strokovo, Volokolamsk Rayon, Moscow Oblast. We have vowed to avenge the Nazi villains for your son. Blood for blood, death for death.

Eternal glory for the courageous soldier! Death to the Nazi occupiers!

Upon authorization of the soldiers, commanders and political workers the letter is signed

Political Section Chief
Btln Commissar Nevolin

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 264, sheet 16 Copy

From the Report of the Western Front Political Directorate to the Commander of the Western Front

25 June 1942

...On 3 June there were the burials of ten brutally tortured soldiers and the burials involved all the personnel of the 129th Separate Brigade and the inhabitants of the village of Strokovo. Speaking at the funeral was the kolkhoz member and secretary of the village Komsomol organization, Comrade L.A. Nedumova. She said: "We, the inhabitants, were the witnesses of the brutal reprisals by the German occupiers against our Red soldiers. They gave up their lives for the motherland. Our old kolkhoz elders cried and we, the young people, burned with hate for the butchers. We urge you, comrade soldiers, to avenge the damned butchers for the death of our comrades."

Speaking on behalf of the Red Armymen, commanders and political workers of the brigade were: Col Comrade Ladygin, Red Armyman Comrade Rusanov, Brigade Military Commissar Comrade Antipov, the Order-Bearer and Sr Polit Instr Leonov and others. The common opinion of the soldiers, commanders and all those present at the meeting was expressed by Red Armyman Rusanov. He said: "Let us vow, brothers, that we will fight to the last drop of blood and avenge the Germans for our comrades."

The brigade of the personnel sent letters to the relatives of Polit Instr, Comrade Pavlov and Red Armymen Geniyevskiy and Semenov.

The ten patriots of the motherland were buried with military honors in a fraternal grave on the southeastern outskirts of the village of Strokovo, by the school.

Chief of the Western Front Political Directorate
Brig Commissar Makarov

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2522, file 369, sheets 306-308
Original

Information From Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment of 8th Guards Rifle Division

13 July 1942

For covering the regiment's retreat to a new defensive line in the area of the village of Strokovo, Volokolamskiy Rayon, the regimental command left a cover group consisting of 11 combat engineers from the combat engineer company under the command of Jr Lt P.I. Firstov and the political instructor, Jr Polit Instr A.M. Pavlov and the following soldiers: A.N. Zubkov, P.I. Sinegovskiy, V.I. Semenov, P.T. Kalyuzhnyy, Ye.A. Dovzhuk, G.V. Ulchenko, P.P. Geniyevskiy and V.I. Manyushin.

Upon testimony by participants in the fighting for Strokovo, this group did not return to the regiment and died a hero's death in an unequal struggle against the Nazi bandits.

Commissar of the 1077th Guards Rifle Regiment
Guards BtlN Commissar Astakhov

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2522, file 369, sheet 313 Original

From the Decoration Diploma for Jr Lt P.I. Firstov, Commander of the Combat Engineer Platoon From the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division

13 July 1942

Comrade Firstov, while in the regiment, showed himself to be a courageous and brave commander.

From the first day of being in command of the platoon, Comrade Firstov drew particular attention to the combat training and indoctrination of the men.

From the first days of fighting his platoon was continuously in a combat situation, and in an exemplary manner it carried out the tasks of mining and blowing up bridges, roads and other installations, blocking the path for the German tanks and personnel, providing an opportunity for its regiment to move to new lines and at the same time destroying enemy personnel and equipment.

Firstov was the soul of the platoon, setting an example of self-sacrifice, heroism and courage for all the soldiers.

In the village of Ilinskoye, Firstov was ordered to mine a bridge 25 m long and blow it up when the Nazis were passing over it. Firstov, having taken with him the combat engineers Yudin, Smolentsev, Kalyuzhnyy, Sinegovskiy and others, himself set to carrying out this task. Having mined the bridge, Firstov with the combat engineer group, hid near the bridge in ambush. The Germans were moving toward the bridge in a close column and at the head marched an officer with an iron cross on his chest. When the Germans had gone onto the bridge, Firstov hit the officer with accurate rounds from the rifle and then connected the wire. An explosion rang out and over 120 Nazis were blown into the air. During the fighting of 16-17 November 1941 at Strokovo, where the Germans breached the regiment's defensive front from the village of Chentsy to the village of Golubtsovo and tried to surround the regiment, the command ordered the combat engineer platoon at any price to cover the regiment's retreat. Firstov had nine soldiers with whom he carried out the mission.

German tanks appeared on the road. There were at least 10 of them. Firstov told his men: "Comrades, the enemy wants to break through to Moscow, the heart of our motherland! The motherland, Stalin have ordered you not to let the Nazis pass." "The Nazis will not pass!" replied the men. These words were confirmed by the senior combat engineers in the regiment.

The tanks drew closer to the infantry. Letting them move in close, the combat engineers initiated battle. The fighting started with 11 Soviet soldiers against the Nazi tanks. This unequal battle lasted from 1000 hours in the morning until 1500 hours in the afternoon.

Using grenades the combat engineers hit initially one and then another tank and destroyed scores of Nazis with rifle and machine gun fire. The first assault was driven off.

A second group of tanks moved up and opened heavy fire from machine guns. The soldiers fought to the last grenade, to the last cartridge. Polit Instr Pavlov was already killed, many of the 11 had been killed and the remainder were heavily wounded. Firstov with his last grenade and with the shout "For Stalin!" leapt out of the trench and threw the grenade at the tank. At this time he was severely wounded. The 10 heroes headed by their own hero Firstov carried out the battle task as the regiment gained the time needed to pull back to a new line.⁷

Commander of the 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of the 8th Guards Rifle Division
Maj Gen Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheets 619, 620
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate for Polit Instr A.M.
Pavlov, Political Instructor of the Combat Engineer of
the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Pavlov, while in the regiment, proved himself to be an intrepid, strong-willed political worker. Being a very strong-willed person, a person of exemplary discipline and preciseness, in possessing a broad viewpoint and in having an excellent knowledge of military affairs, particularly combat engineering, Comrade Pavlov from the first day of the constituting of the regiment and the combat engineer company constantly carried out daily combat and party-political work among the soldiers and commanders of the company.

On 17 November 1941, in the evening 7 enemy tanks succeeded in breaking out from the village of Chentsy to the village of Golubtsovo and catching our battalions in the rear. On 18 November 1941, another 20 enemy tanks moved up as well as fresh forces of submachine gunners and infantry, and the fighting took on even greater force. A threat arose that all these tanks would break through along the road to the village of Strokovo, the battalions would be completely surrounded and the escape routes cut and this meant a threat of destruction to the regiment and particularly its equipment.

On 18 November 1941, at 0800 hours in the morning, the Jr Polit Instr, Comrade Pavlov and Jr Lt Firstov received an order at any price to support the regiment's retreat. In knowing the situation well and in recognizing

the threat to the regiment, Comrade Pavlov went along each soldier in the trenches and urged all of them to defend the homeland to the last drop of blood. Soon thereafter, in moving up in groups and carrying out heavy fire, the tanks began to move along the road to Strokovo, where these 11 bold men headed by Comrade Pavlov were sitting in their trenches. But then for several instants Pavlov stood up tall and threw a grenade, and after him a number of men also threw grenades. With a broken track the tank halted. The remaining tanks turned back and retreated. This happened several times. The tanks moved up in an echelon, endeavoring to break through along this road, but every time they encountered the unlimited heroism and courage of these 11 brave men. During these attempts another tank was hit.

The fighting lasted several hours and the group of intrepid soldiers still held the road, it was preventing the tanks from moving along it but the forces were unequal. The tanks and infantry succeeded in surrounding the brave soldiers and breaking into the village of Strokovo. In this unequal fighting, the Jr Polit Instr, Comrade Pavlov perished heroically along with the 10 courageous combat engineers. Due to the tenacity of these brave men, the regiment's battalions retreated with all the equipment to another line. The order had been carried out by the combat engineer platoon.⁸

Commander of the 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of the 8th Guards Rifle Division
Maj Gen Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 603
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate of Pvt P.P.
Geniyevskiy, Soldier of the Combat Engineer Platoon in
the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Geniyevskiy, while in the regiment, showed courage and valor in fighting the German occupiers.

In the fighting for the village of Novinki, disdaining the heavy enemy fire, he mined and blew up a bridge.

In the fighting for Goloperovo, he mined the road, where after this 2 enemy tanks and 10 German soldiers were blown up.

At the settlement of Ilinskoye, at risk to his life, he mined a section of the highway and after this an enemy tank went over it and was blown up.

On 18 November 1941, as part of the 11 courageous combat engineers in the area of the village of Strokovo, he covered the retreat of our regiment. When the tanks had come within close range, he hit one enemy tank from his trench. In driving off the Nazi assaults, he destroyed 17 German soldiers in this fighting.

Comrade Geniyevskiy perished in this unequal battle in a hero's death. The combat engineer platoon held up the enemy tanks for several hours, providing an opportunity for our regiment to take up a new line.⁹

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 581
Original

**Decoration Certificate for Pvt Ye.A. Dovzhuk, Soldier in
the Combat Engineer Platoon of the 1077th Rifle
Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Dovzhuk, while in the regiment, proved to be a bold, strong-willed Red Armyman.

In the fighting for the village of Kuryanovo, along with the assistant platoon commander, Comrade Zubkov, he mined the road under heavy enemy machine gun and mortar fire. Comrade Dovzhuk lay a mine on a bridge, after which the bridge was blown up by Comrade Dovzhuk and this held up the enemy advance.

At Goloperovo, Comrade Dovzhuk excellently carried out a combat mission to blow up engineer structures.

Upon returning from this assignment, Comrade Dovzhuk encountered a group

of Nazi soldiers, he did not lose his head but opened up surprise fire from his rifle, and in so doing, Comrade Dovzhuk killed 5 Nazis and the remainder was put to flight.

On 18 November 1941, as part of 11 courageous hero combat engineers, he covered the retreat of our regiment in the Strokovo region. When the enemy tanks began to come closer to the trenches, Comrade Dovzhuk rose up from the trench and began throwing grenades at the tanks, as a result of which Comrade Dovzhuk along with Comrade Zubkov hit one tank.

The enraged Nazis directly the remaining tanks directly at their trench. Comrade Dovzhuk in unequal combat died a hero's death. The combat engineer platoon carried out the combat task and the enemy tanks were held up, providing an opportunity for our regiment to retreat with all its materiel to a new line.¹⁰

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 585
Original

**Decoration Certificate for Sr Sgt A.N. Zubkov,
Assistant Commander of the Combat Engineer Platoon
From the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle
Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Zubkov, while in the regiment, proved himself to be a strong-willed, brave soldier of the Red Army.

In the fighting for the village of Kuryanovo, in the retreat of the regiment, Comrade Zubkov with a group of combat engineers mined the road and then under heavy enemy machine gun fire himself personally blew up a bridge and thereby checked the enemy's advance.

In the fighting for the village of Goloperovo, Comrade Zubkov led a group of combat engineers in blowing up engineer structures and simultaneously organized the cover for the retreat of our regiment, where he personally destroyed 21 German soldiers with his rifle.

On 18 November 1941, as part of the 11 courageous combat engineers, he covered the retreat of the regiment in the area of the village of Strokovo. In this fighting, Comrade Zubkov hit one tank with grenades. Then using his rifle he began to destroy the German submachine gunners. Being surrounded, he did not surrender. Wounded, he jumped out of his shelter and with the last grenade got another several Nazis.

Comrade Zubkov died a hero's death in unequal combat.

The fighting lasted from 1000 hours in the morning to 1500 hours in the day. The combat engineer platoon held up the enemy tanks, providing an opportunity for the regiment to take up a new line.¹¹

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 589
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate for Pvt P.G.
Kalyuzhnyy, Soldier in the Combat Engineer Platoon of
the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Kalyuzhnyy, while in the regiment, showed himself to be a fearless soldier.

On 23 October 1941, Comrade Kalyuzhnyy, together with the combat engineers, Comrades Smolentsov, Yudin and Sinegovskiy, in the village of Ilinskoye, Volokolamskiy Rayon of Moscow Oblast, prepared a bridge for detonation, waiting until the Germans came onto the bridge and then blew it up. Here over 120 German soldiers were destroyed headed by an officer who was a captain with the Iron Cross.

On 1 November 1941, Comrade Kalyuzhnyy, together with Comrade Sinegovskiy, under enemy machine gun and mortar fire mined the Sofino—Popovkino road. After this a German armored vehicle came down the road and it was blown up on their mines.

On 18 November 1941, when the regiment was threatened with danger, Comrade Kalyuzhnyy [was] among the 11 hero combat engineers who covered the regiment's retreat, holding up more than 20 Nazi tanks.

At 1000 hours in the morning of 18 November 1941, in front of the village of Strokovo, there appeared over 20 enemy tanks, they were traveling in echelons with sub-machine gunners and up to a battalion of infantry behind them. The 11 courageous combat engineers were in trenches and were prepared for an unequal clash. Comrade Kalyuzhnyy was next to his friend, Comrade Sinegovskiy. Before the fighting, Comrade Kalyuzhnyy had said to his comrades: "We will die but we will not let the Nazis reach the heart of our motherland, Moscow!" These words were confirmed by the senior combat engineer, Comrade Ibrayev, who is now in our regiment. So 2 Nazi tanks approached the trenches. Comrade Kalyuzhnyy rose up from the trench and began to throw grenades at the first tank. As a result of this, together with Sinegovskiy, he hit one tank, the second turned away but after a certain time a new group of tanks approached their trench and while Comrade Kalyuzhnyy with redoubled energy began throwing grenades at them, the tanks drove directly onto the trench.

Comrade Kalyuzhnyy died a hero's death in unequal battle. For 4 hours the intrepid combat engineers held up the enemy tanks and during this time the regiment took up a better line.

Combat engineer, Comrade Kalyuzhnyy, honorably carried out the battle task.¹²

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 593
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate for Pvt V.I.
Manyushin, Soldier in the Combat Engineer Platoon of
the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Manyushin, while in the regiment, proved to be a brave, exemplary soldier.

In the fighting for the village of Novinki, under heavy enemy machine gun fire and disregarding the danger, Comrade Manyushin mined the road and the approaches to the village. After mining the road, he encountered a

group of German soldiers where, in concealing himself, he destroyed 15 Nazis.

Subsequently, Comrade Manyushin mined a section of the Volokolamsk Highway. After mining, two motor vehicles with enemy infantry passed over this sector and they were blown up. Comrade Manyushin destroyed the surviving soldiers with his rifle, thereby killing up to 10 persons.

On 18 November 1941, among the 11 courageous hero combat engineers, Comrade Manyushin covered the retreat of our regiment in the area of the village of Strokovo. In bravely driving off the assaults of the brutal Nazis, Comrade Manyushin destroyed up to 13 men. But then a new group of enemy tanks turned toward the trench. Comrade Manyushin died a hero's death. The combat engineer platoon, in fighting with uneven forces from 1000 hours in the morning until 1500 hours in the afternoon, constantly held up the tanks and thereby provided time for the regiment to pull back to a new line.¹³

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 597

**From the Decoration Certificate for Sgt D.K. Materkin,
Squad Commander of the Combat Engineer Platoon
From the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle
Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Materkin, while in the regiment, proved to be a strong-willed, courageous commander.

Comrade Materkin under enemy mortar and machine gun fire mined a road in the area of the village of Shchekino—Kalistovo—Putyatino and blew up a bridge and after this two enemy tanks were blown up on the mined section.

On 1 September 1941, he mined the Sofino—Popovkino road. In carrying out the battle assignment, five German soldiers attacked him, Comrade Materkin killed four soldiers, took their documents and weapons and delivered them to the regimental staff.

On 18 September 1941, Comrade Materkin with his squad including the 11 hero combat engineers, was covering the retreat of our regiment in the area of the village of Strokovo. Having let two tanks come close to the trenches, Comrade Materkin rose up from the trench and began throwing grenades and Molotov cocktails at the tanks, having forced both tanks to turn back, but another three tanks moved in from the flank, and the intrepid combat engineer again entered unequal battle.

Comrade Materkin died a hero's death. The combat engineer held up the enemy tanks providing an opportunity for the regiment to take up a new, better line.¹⁴

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 601
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate for Pvt V.I. Semenov,
Soldier From the Combat Engineer Platoon of the
1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Semenov, while in the regiment, proved to be a bold, intrepid fighter of the Red Army.

On 25 October 1941, Comrade Semenov, disregarding the danger to his life, mined the Novinki—Ilinskaya Highway. On 28 October 1941, being on the left flank of the defenses of the first battalion, he heroically drove off Nazi assaults using grenades and his rifle. He destroyed over 14 Nazis.

On 18 November 1941, among the 11 courageous hero combat engineers, he covered the retreat of our regiment in the region of the village of Strokovo. When a tank had moved close to the trench, Comrade Semenov hit it with grenades and also destroyed several Nazis. Another group of tanks came at the trench. Comrade Semenov perished in the unequal battle as a hero.

The combat engineer platoon along with Comrade Semenov held up the advance of the enemy tanks and provided an opportunity for our regiment to pull back to a better line.¹⁵

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 608
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate for Pvt P.I.
Sinegovskiy, Soldier From the Combat Engineer
Platoon of the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle
Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Sinegovskiy proved himself to be a man of great will power, brave, decisive and an enterprising soldier.

On 23 October 1941, Sinegovskiy together with the combat engineers Comrades Smolentsov, Yudin and Kalyuzhnyy in the village of Ilinskoye, Volokolamskiy Rayon of Moscow Oblast, prepared a bridge for detonation. Waiting until the Germans were on the bridge, they

blew it up. Here they destroyed over 120 German soldiers headed by an officer, a captain with the Iron Cross.

On 1 November 1941, Comrade Sinegovskiy together with Comrade Kalyuzhnyy, under enemy machine gun and mortar fire, mined the Sofino—Popovkino road. After this, a German armored vehicle came down the road and it was blown up on their mines.

On 18 November 1941, when the enemy was threatened with danger, Comrade Sinegovskiy [was] among the 11 hero combat engineers who covered the regiment's retreat, holding up over 20 Nazi tanks.

At 1000 hours in the morning of 18 November 1941, over 20 enemy tanks appeared in front of the village of Strokovo, they moved in small groups and behind them came submachine gunners and up to a battalion of infantry. The 11 courageous combat engineers were in trenches ready for combat against the steel behemoths. Comrade Sinegovskiy was in a trench with Comrade Kalyuzhnyy. Two tanks were coming close to the trenches; Comrade Sinegovskiy rose up in the trench and with his inherent agility threw grenade after grenade at the enemy tank. The tank was damaged and halted and the second turned away. But then a new group of tanks began to approach their trench. Comrade Sinegovskiy again picked up the grenades and threw them rapidly at the enemy tanks, but the latter came directly down on the trench.

The intrepid Panfilov soldier, Comrade Sinegovskiy, died a hero's death....¹⁶

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 612
Original

**From the Decoration Certificate for Pvt G.V. Ulchenko,
Soldier of the Combat Engineer Platoon From the
1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division**

13 July 1942

Comrade Ulchenko, while in the regiment, proved to be an intrepid fighter.

In the fighting for the village of Shchekino, under enemy mortar and machine gun fire, he mined the approaches to the village of Shchekino, holding up the German troop advance.

In the fighting for the village of Popovkino, he went out on reconnaissance and during this established the enemy weapons and mined the road. Upon returning from reconnaissance, he spotted a group of Nazis cleverly camouflaged, he opened up surprise fire and destroyed 13 German soldiers.

In the area of the village of Strokovo on 18 September [sic] 1941, as part of the 11 hero combat engineers, he covered the regiment's retreat. Comrade Ulchenko was ordered to move forward with a submachine gun and cut the Nazis off from the tanks.

When the tanks had passed, Comrade Ulchenko at point-blank range emptied the entire cartridge disk of the submachine gun. Upon recovering, the Germans again rose up and moved after Comrade Ulchenko. Again suffering losses, the Nazis began to retreat. Then the intrepid Comrade Ulchenko jumped out of his shelter and threw a grenade, destroying another several Nazis. Being severely wounded, Comrade Ulchenko continued to destroy the Nazis. In unequal combat Comrade Ulchenko died a hero's death, having honorably carried out the set battle task.¹⁷

Commander of 30th Guards Rifle Regiment
of 8th Guards Rifle Division
Guards Maj Uralskiy

TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 682524, file 341, sheet 616
Original

Footnotes

1. TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 208, inv. 2524, file 13, sheet 31.

2. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945: Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1985, p 606.

3. The fate of the 11th combat engineer, Gleb Vladimirovich Ulchenko, was unknown. It was felt that he had perished along with the others, although his body was not discovered. However, as was established from the archival documents by the authors of the given publication, G.V. Ulchenko miraculously remained alive after the fighting at Strokovo. He served in the 212th Army Reserve Rifle Regiment and then in the 740th Rifle Regiment of the 217th Rifle Division, where on 28 February 1943, he was severely wounded and on 20 March died in the 413th Evacuation Hospital. G.V. Ulchenko was buried in a fraternal grave at the city cemetery in Kaluga (TsAMO, inv. 380848, file 4, sheet 96; inv. 377877s, file 7, sheet 17; report, in 12608, 1943).

4. Vasilii Ivanovich Manoshin is found directly in the archival documents of the 1077th Rifle Regiment of the 316th Rifle Division. In the information of 3 June 1942, his last name was misspelled and subsequently in the existing archival documents and literature he is now found as Vasilii Ivanovich Manyushin.

5. "Podvig naroda: Pamyatniki Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny, 1941-1945" [Feat of the People: Monuments of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Politizdat, 1984, p 33.

6. The new numbering for the division's units was awarded on 23 February 1942.

* In this manner in the document. Actual patronymic—Mikhaylovich.

7. For this feat Jr Lt P.I. Firstov by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

8. For this feat Polit Instr A.M. Pavlov by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

9. For this feat Pvt P.P. Geniyevskiy by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

10. For this feat Pvt Ye.A. Dovzhuk by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

11. For this feat Sr Sgt A.N. Zubkov by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

12. For this feat Pvt P.G. Kalyuzhnyy by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

13. For this feat Pvt V.I. Manyushin by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

14. For this feat Sgt D.K. Materkin by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

15. For this feat Pvt V.I. Semenov by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

16. For this feat Pvt P.I. Sinegovskiy by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

17. For this feat Pvt G.V. Ulchenko by the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 0884 of 11 August 1942 was awarded the Order of Lenin (posthumously).

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First Disaster

00010006c Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 89 (signed to press
29 Dec 88) pp 39-53

[Archival Documents, published under the heading "From the Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense," prepared by Capt A.S. Anufriyev: "The First Disaster; It is Difficult to Overestimate the Military-Political Significance of Events Occurring on the Soviet-German Front at Moscow at the Beginning of December 1941"]

[Text] What subsequently was termed the turning point in the Battle of Moscow told on the entire course of World War II, it demonstrated the might of the Soviet Union to the entire world and was one of the first powerful warnings to the Nazi ruling clique of Germany on the inexorability of the approaching disaster. Here the Wehrmacht's superior military leadership felt the entire enormity of the collapse of its plans for a "blitzkrieg." With good reason Nazi propaganda carefully concealed the true condition of the troops around Moscow and delayed, as much as was possible, providing information on the situation on the main sector. Up to 5 December 1941, the Central Press was shouting about the successful offensive against Moscow and that the "victorious Wehrmacht formations" were about to break into Red Square and that victory over the "Bolshevik colossus" was not far off. The newspapers were full of assurances from the Fuhrer and Wehrmacht generals for the quick termination to the next brilliant campaign. Suddenly the victorious reports from the main sector were replaced by short and rather depressing announcements about the "terrible weather conditions and severe state of the roads on the central sector of the Eastern Front" and these were completely lost among information about the "victories of German arms" on any of the other sectors.

Such a once-favored word as "Moscow" virtually disappeared from the pages of the central Nazi newspaper VOLKISCHER BEOBACHTER. The awkward lull in announcements from the Eastern Front was compensated for by a "devastating criticism" of statements by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, by a report "Bulgaria on the Path to Prosperity," and by information on the "victories at sea"; an idyllic photograph was published of the meeting of the elderly French Mar Petain with Reichsmarshal Goring. And although the Army newspaper DIE FRONT endeavored to maintain a professional military style, in claiming an objective treatment of the course of operations, it was also forced to provide the readers with "valuable" military information of the sort "the Oberfeldfelbel has won the countryside." In truth, the "won," and one must honor the objectivity of the newspaper, was located "on the central sector of the Eastern Front." The readers were left to think that clearly the offensive against Moscow was developing successfully.

On 8 December VOLKISCHER BEOBACHTER under the bold title "Successful Fighting on the Eastern Front"

provided information only on the situation on the Karelian Front and around Leningrad, passing over in silence the main sector. Only on the second page was literally the following given: "Here, around Moscow, each day one can see that the Bolshevik troops have been dealt a major defeat and their aviation is almost crushed. The lull which the weather has provided will not help them. They can no longer change their fate, no matter how they might resist." Moreover, a hint that the weather had already changed for the better was given in a terse informational bulletin from the Wehrmacht "The Offensive Against Moscow is Continuing." There were rather serious grounds for such "terseness" of the informational bulletin. However, only after the issuing of the Fuhrer's December directive did the first announcements appear in the newspapers about the "straightening out of the front line."

In October 1941, when the Nazi leaders were settling the question of the further offensive, the situation was viewed in the following manner: the main forces of the Red Army had been routed, the main reserves had been destroyed and nothing could prevent the development of an offensive by all three army groups. The superior military and political leadership was unanimous about this assessment and the differences merely concerned the determining of the main axis. Although Hitler and Field Mar Keitel, whom the Prussian military aristocrats called to his face "Lakeitel," were vacillating, ultimately the leadership of the ground forces persuaded him of the "100-percent prospect of success" for a drive against Moscow. The decision was taken regardless of the frank admission by the Fuhrer: "On 22 June we opened up a door without knowing what stood behind it."

The Wehrmacht strategists, having closed their eyes to the first indications of the collapse of their hopes, continued to believe in the already dying "star of the blitzkrieg" placating themselves with the idea of the "occurrence of a moment for a certain equilibrium of forces between the German and Soviet troops."

By the end of November 1941, in the nature of the fighting at Moscow one could see more and more clearly that initially objectively existing factor which would ultimately bring the entire German military machine to complete disaster. This is eloquently apparent from the reports received by the staff of Army Group Center at the end of November and which emphasized the growing physical and moral exhaustion of the troops. The commander of the army group, Gen Field Mar von Bock repeatedly reported on the threatening state of the advancing armies. There was particular concern over the absence of information concerning the plans of the superior military leadership. The troops were waiting for orders to go over to the defensive. The General Staff of the Ground Troops possessed sufficient information about the approaching threat and Gen Field Mar von Brauchitsch supported the opinion of the commander of Army Group Center and, in endeavoring to take certain

measures to ease the situation of the troops, had early on planned a retreat by lines and had issued orders to go over to the offensive.

The Supreme Wehrmacht Command continued to insist on an offensive, closing its eyes to the disastrous state of the troops.

The Red Army counteroffensive was a complete surprise for the superior military leadership of Nazi Germany. Although the army staffs realized that the Red Army "would make maximum use of the winter stabilization of the front for further strengthening reinforcements and preparing new reserves," there was no real awareness of the scope of the collapse at Moscow and all its consequences. This is seen from the fact that in drawing up the plan for the 1942 campaign, the military leadership had not lost hope of achieving victory by a new offensive and used the previous ideas, recognizing, however, that the troops of the Eastern Front were no longer capable of advancing along the entire length of the front as in 1941. The Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces von Brauchitsch was fired. The same fate somewhat later befell the Commander of Army Group Center von Bock. The fact that this was done not out of political motives but clearly for those measures which they had undertaken contrary to the will of the Fuhrer also shows the fatal inability of the German military machine to realistically assess its own capabilities. As a result of the following organizational changes, the General Staff of the Ground Forces was completely deprived of any independence in taking decisions of a strategic nature. Subsequently, the degree of its dependence on the Nazi Party upper clique was more and more strengthened. It was impossible to call the retreat of the German troops at Moscow "organized." In its nature it was more like an avalanche which was hard to control. The harshest measures were applied against the "guilty parties" and the justifications were the most inexplicable including "an incorrect understanding of the Fuhrer's directive" and "the illusions of rear lines." Hitler was convinced that there was no necessity for a hurried retreat and the main strike force—the panzer groups—had fully maintained their battleworthiness. The gloomy forebodings of certain German generals did not play any role, remaining only a private opinion. The style and methods for elaborating operational decisions on the staffs are rather eloquently characterized by the proposals by the commander of the 9th Army and submitted for review to the staff of Army Group Center on the eve of the Red Army counteroffensive. The commander, concerned by a rapid decline in the "fighting spirit of the troops" who were freezing in the trenches on the northern flank of the army group, had taken a desperate decision, proposing to advance to Vyshniy Volochek and dig in on a line following the railroad in order to shorten the length of the front line. For this, in his opinion, it was essential to also move forward the 16th Army from Army Group North. All of this was merely to be able to bring at least a portion of the frozen and lice-ridden soldiers to the

rear for rest and bringing up to strength. It merely remains to add that the commander's plans remained on paper.

In leafing through the archival documents relating to the Nazi Army and showing the complete collapse of the idea of a "blitzkrieg" against Moscow, one is again persuaded that the irresponsible disdain for the enemy, the unrestrained overexaggeration of the capabilities of one's troops and the intentional suppression of the initiative of subordinates for the sake of the illusory plans of the higher command were not merely individual errors and mistakes by the Nazi strategists but a completely natural phenomenon characteristic of the gigantic military machine of Germany in those times.

* * *

**Report by Commander of Army Group Center to
Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces on Situation
Around Moscow, by Telegraph**

Translation from German
Top Secret

For command eyes only!
Transmit only by officer!

Headquarters
1 December 1941, 1300 hours

To the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces

Regardless of the repeated requests and reports by the Army Group to OKH concerning the threatening state of the troops, a decision was taken to continue the offensive, regardless of the danger of the complete loss of troop battleworthiness. The presently continuing offensive is being conducted employing all tactical capabilities and basically frontally. There is not enough forces for a larger enveloping maneuver, as has been reported, and now there is no longer any opportunity of a large-scale movement of the troops. In the course of bloody fighting we, possibly, will advance to a shallow depth and will also defeat a portion of the enemy forces, but in operational terms the offensive will scarcely provide any tangible results. As was shown by the fighting of the last 14 days, the assumption that the enemy opposing the army group is "close to defeat" was an illusion. To halt before the gates of Moscow—the major transport junction of Eastern Russia—means to conduct heavy defensive battles against an enemy which has great numerical superiority. The army group lacks sufficient forces for this even for a limited time. And even if the impossible became possible and we did succeed in gaining additional space, for surrounding Moscow and blockading it to the southeast, east and northeast we do not have enough forces at all. Consequently, the offensive loses any sense moreover as the time is not far off when the forces of the troops will be exhausted. Now it is essential to decide what must be done farther. The army group is extended along a front of approximately 1,000 km and had only one weak division in the rear as a reserve. With

such a placement of forces, when we have heavy casualties in the command personnel and the combat capability of the troops is low, we are incapable of conducting more or less planned offensive actions. Due to interruptions in rail operations we also do not have an opportunity to prepare the troops broadly along the front for defensive fighting as well as supply them in the course of this fighting.

The intentions of the superior leadership are unknown to me. Even if the army group must go over to the defensive on the lines achieved for the winter period, with the present balance of forces this would be possible only under the condition of assigning large reserves in order to be able to parry possible enemy thrusts and in turn rotate for rest and manning up the first echelon divisions which have been bled white in the fighting. For this at least 12 additional divisions would be required. I do not know if we have so many divisions and whether they could be moved to the combat area in the foreseeable future. The next requisite condition is order and dependable operation of rail transport and thus the possibility of regular supply of the troops and creating the required supplies. If both these demands are unattainable, then we must immediately choose an advantageous and less extended line in the rear for the troops of the Eastern Front and organize it in engineer terms with the appropriate forces, as well as prepare places for the billeting of the troops and rear lines of communications so that in receiving the appropriate order this could be occupied in a short period of time.

Signature: von Bock (Commander of Army Group Center)

TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 500, inv. 12473, file 265, sheet 637

Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
Secret
2 December 1941

To 2d Panzer Army 4th Army 4th Panzer Group 3d Panzer Group

It has recently been established that the enemy is endeavoring to ease its situation, shifting entire divisions or units of divisions from the least threatened to the most threatened sectors of the front. The arrival of new reinforcements was noted on just one sector and in small numbers.

From this it follows that the enemy defenses are on the brink of...crisis. It is essential to make every effort to use this weakness of the enemy.

I request the troops immediately be informed of the current order.

Signature: von Bock (Commander of Army Group Center)

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheet 96

Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
Secret
3 December 1941

To 4th Army 4th Panzer Group 3d Panzer Group

The 3d Panzer Group is to push the enemy from the area between the boundary lines with the 4th Panzer Group, the Uchinskoye Reservoir and the Moskva—Volga Canal.

For carrying out this task, the 23d Infantry Division will temporarily be subordinate to the 3d Panzer Group. Supply of the division will be carried out by the former order. After conducting the above-indicated operation, the 23d Infantry Division will again be put under the 4th Panzer Group.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 96-97

Announcement From 4th Army

Translated from German
1730 hours, 3 December 1941

Assessment of State of 4th Panzer Group

The offensive might of the corps is basically depleted.

Reasons: physical and moral overstress, the putting out of action of a large number of commanders and insufficient amount of winter clothing.

While it is still possible we must achieve limited successes due to the successful utilization of local conditions. Probable stop on the line: lower courses of the Istra River—Nakhabinka River—Podolino—Klyazminskoye Reservoir. A further offensive can lead to the bleeding white of the units and make the repelling of Russian counterattacks impossible. On the basis of the assessment of this situation and in both adjacent formations the superior command must decide whether to undertake a retreat. In this event the proposed line would be: the Nara Ponds—Moskva River—Zvenigorod—Istrinskoye Reservoir—Solnechnogorsk.

Signed by Hopner

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 565, sheet 165

Divisional Battle Order to Go Over to the Defensive From 4 December 1941

Translated from German

Division SS Reich
Operations Section

Divisional Command Post
1400 hours, 4 December 1941

1) The Regiments Deutschland and Fuhrer in the course of the offensive against Lenino on 3 October

caused heavy losses to the enemy and took the population point.

In the aim of better defensive opportunities in the following days the security line during the night of 4 December was moved to the western outskirts of Lenino.

2) The XL Panzer Corps with flanks abutting the neighboring units on 4 December is to go over to the defensive and hold the achieved line....

Wherever possible small infantry forces are to act as units. Particularly where there are broad fields of vision, the terrain lying in front is to be kept under surveillance, using machine guns and other heavy weapons. The infantry not employed on the forward line is to be quartered close to the positions. Behind the obstructed sections of the forward defensive edge, reserves are to be kept on the ready for counterattacks....

13) The commanders of all ranks are responsible for not allowing the accumulation of personnel in areas subjected to the fire of enemy artillery or other heavy weapons.

Direct hits in large accumulations of personnel have repeatedly caused significant losses which could have been avoided.

An excessive accumulation of commanders at command posts is not to be permitted. Commanders and aides are to make certain that only commanders arriving for reports or receiving orders are to be at their command posts. The remainder are to be outside of the command posts but in such a manner as to be quickly summoned to them.

This is an order for all commanders.

Attention is not being paid also to building close to the command posts shelters with antishrapnel roofs and construction must commence immediately after setting up the command post.

14) A field police platoon is to put up indicators on the Istra—Snigiri Station—Rozhdestvenno road and control traffic along this road and particularly monitor the accumulating of transport in areas of enemy fire.

15) A combat engineer battalion with the immediate approval from the section commanders is to provide mining ahead of the forward defensive edge as well as ahead of the battle outposts.

Mining is to be reported to the division according to the prescribed form.

16) Intelligence.

The main task for intelligence during the defensive is: to establish the most complete possible picture for the organization of the main enemy defensive zone and its security outposts.

To neutralize by artillery fire the enemy accumulations established by patrols. To report beforehand to the divisional staff on the actions of the assault groups in the aim of capturing important points and enemy guard posts.

17) Signals.

Radio, as before.

Telephone communications with the XL Panzer Corps, the Regiments Deutschland and Fuhrer, with the artillery chief 128, the artillery regiment SS, the motorcycle-rifle battalion, the intelligence battalion and section 1b. The remaining units are to be connected.

The signals battalion using a double-cable line is to provide constant contact with the regiments and the motorcycle-rifle battalion.

18) Divisional command post: unchanged.

Bittrich

Supplement:

In front of the V Artillery Corps, English tanks have appeared of the class II and III. An antitank cannon with a caliber of 3.7 cm pierces at a range of 150 m the turret race, the driving sprocket, the road wheel and the track. From the same distance the side armor can also be pierced. Flanking firing positions are preferred.

German tanks of the III and IV class with a tank cannon having a caliber of 50 mm and 70 mm can pierce English tanks at all places.

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 380, sheets 60-65

Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
Top Secret
5 December 1941

To 3d Panzer Group 4th Panzer Group 4th Army

Reference: Order for the 3d Panzer Group, No. 1981/41, secret, of 5 December 1941

The 3d Panzer Group is to go over to the defensive.

The 23d Infantry Division is to remain under it.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheet 97

Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
Top Secret
5 December 1941

To Commander 4th Army Commander 4th Panzer
Group Commander 3d Panzer Group

In the event that the order arrives for a partial disengagement from the enemy and the assuming of the defensive, the army group is to establish the following general line:

The Nara Ponds—the course of the Moskva River to Karinskoye—Istrinskoye Reservoir—Senezhskoye Lake—area to the east of Klin—the left flank of the 36th Motorized Division in the area of the Volzhskoye Reservoir. In the event of a retreat, the following demarcation line is effective between the 4th Army and the 3d Panzer Group: Nekrasino—the northeastern extremity of Senezhskoye Lake—Udino (population points for the 3d Panzer Group).

The start of the retreat which, according to the calculations of the army group, will require two nights, possibly will be set for the evening of 6 December and this will be announced in a separate order.

The 4th Army and the 3d Panzer Group are to set and report to the army group staff an intermediate line which they can reach in the first line of the retreat. This is essential for achieving a complete coordination between both formations in retreat.

For now it is merely a question of preparations for the forthcoming operation as the Fuhrer's decision on this question is still unknown.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 97-98

Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
Top secret
6 December 1941

To 4th Army 3d Panzer Group 4th Panzer Group

1. The proposed retreat to the line designated in the Order of the Army Group Staff, No. 2870/41, Top Secret, of 5 December 1941, will be carried out. The time for the start of the retreat and the intermediate lines will be announced supplementarily.

2. The 3d Panzer Group during the night of 6-7 December is to reach the first intermediate line, with the right flank on the line Udino—Kamenka—Olgovo. The further retreat depends upon the pullback of the 4th Panzer Group. The 3d Panzer Group must not lose contact with the northern flank of the V Army Corps.

3. The 4th Panzer Group is to receive information on the designated time and plan for the retreat of the V Army Corps.

4. Preparations are to be commenced immediately for the retreat as well as for destroying all facilities on the territory abandoned to the enemy.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 99-100

Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army Group Center to 4th Army, 3d and 4th Panzer Groups

Translated from German
Top Secret
6 December 1941

To 4th Army 3d Panzer Group 4th Panzer Group

1. The right flank of the 3d Panzer Group is to retreat:

During the night of 6-7 December to the line of Udino—Kamenka—Olgovo, during the night of 7-8 December to a line of Kochergino—Rogachevo and then in the event of necessity:

During the night of 8-9 December, to the line of the northern extremity of Senezhskoye Lake—Aladino—Dorokhovo.

2. The 4th Panzer Group in close cooperation with the 3d Panzer Group is to pull back its northern flank simultaneously with the retreat of the southern flank of the 3d Panzer Group to the area of Senezhskoye Lake.

3. The question of the retreat for all the remaining formations of the 4th Panzer Group to the line designated in the Order of the Army Group Center Staff No. 2870/41, Top Secret, of 5 December 1941, can be taken by the commander of the 4th Army.

The decision for this question should be reported to the staff of the army group.

4. Demarcation line between the 4th Army and the 3d Panzer Group: Yaropolets—Teryayevo—Nekrasino—Davydkovo (population points for the 4th Army)—Senezhskoye Lake (4th Army)—Kheteyvo (3d Panzer Group)—Udino (3d Panzer Group).

For supply purposes the 3d Panzer Group in its sector is to use the Yaropolets—Nekrasino road.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 98-99

**Telegraphed Operation Order From Commander of
Army Group Center**

Translated from German
Top Secret
8 December 1941

To 4th Army 4th Panzer Group 3d Panzer Group 9th Army

As of the moment of receiving this order, the 3d Panzer Group is to be put under the 4th Army (Col Gen Hopner). The boundary with the 9th Army and the supply of the 3d Panzer Group are to remain unchanged.

Enemy units which have broken through should be stopped on the line: the northern extremity of the Istrinskoye Reservoir—Nekrasino—the southwestern extremity of the Volzhskoye Reservoir.

Supplement for the 3d Panzer Group:

I express my particular gratitude to the command of the 3d Panzer Group and am hopeful that in the future the panzer group as before will stubbornly defend each clump of land.

Signature: von Bock (Commander of Army Group Center)

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheet 101

**Telegraphed Message From Staff of Army Group
Center to Staff of 4th Army**

Translated from German
Top Secret
8 December 1941

To 4th Army

From the 2d Panzer Army the following information has been received:

"In the area of Aleksin, the enemy is preparing for an offensive. This provides reason to assume that in the next defensive battles this sector will be crucial.

"As a consequence of our small numbers and the great length of the defended sector, the XLIII Army Corps is unable to strengthen its forward edge in the Aleksin area or assign necessary reserves.

"The 2d Panzer Army requests the reinforcing of the XLIII Army Corps by the 53d Infantry Division and the moving of the army line to Tarus."

The army group requests the command of the 4th Army to give its opinion on this question.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 100-101

Staff of 4th Tank Group

1a No. 2944/41, Top Secret

Translated from German
10 December 1941

Assessment of Situation on 10 December (Noon)

Units of the 4th Panzer Group are retreating in a planned manner to the new defensive line. In the course of recent fighting, under constant assault by the Russians, the losses have been significant and here also the losses resulting from the frosts must also be added. The possibility of conducting the defensive on the new line has in part not yet been assessed, for example in the zone of the IX Army Corps, where it is essential to reinforce the front with the forces of the 255th Infantry Division. A weak point remains the broad zone of the VII Army Corps (33 km) with the motorway passing here. However, the new defensive line should be held in any event in order to raise the morale of the very exhausted troops. This is completely possible although as yet it has not been possible to create reserves anywhere.

On the northern flank of the 3d Panzer Group on 7 December, the enemy formed a breakthrough which has not yet been closed. Here is the axis of the main Russian thrust. In the event of widening the success on this sector, the Russians will create a threat to the only road for supplying the 3d Panzer Group and upon which the V Army Corps also depends. For this reason, the 3d Panzer Group with all its available forces must attack from the direction of Klin and to the east of the road to Zavidovo in the aim of restoring contact with the 36th Infantry Division (motorized). The forces of the 2d Panzer Division will also respectively be aimed at a rendezvous. The moving up of forces is impeded by the poor state of the road, while the ice and snowdrifts tell particularly on the movement of motorized transport. There is less and less fuel.

The counterstrike by the 3d Panzer Group has encountered strong Russian forces. If it succeeds the threat will be eliminated to the entire defensive front. If it is unsuccessful, a breach will be made in the front line and we will be unable to close it with our own forces: in the first place, the panzer group does not have any reserve with the exception of the arriving 20th Panzer Division, secondly, a new front must be established to the west, as there are no possibilities of bringing up troops from the southwest. As an alternate position the only possible one is the line of Bol. Sestra—Lama. The 36th Infantry Division (motorized) has been cut off from the 3d Panzer Group and can retreat only to the west.

The situation of the 3d Panzer Group is also critical as its sole supply line of Volokolamsk—Klin in the area of Klin and Vysokovskiy is threatened. Any retreat, including also units of the V Army Corps, will also be made along this road. At present, this road is so overburdened that the movement which began in the evening of the

motorized rifle battalion of the 10th Panzer Division from the area to the southeast of Novopetrovskoye via Volokolamsk to Klin took more than 58 hours. It is impossible to move new traffic along this road and it should be exclusively at the disposal of the 3d Panzer Group and the V Army Corps for tactical movements and supply.

A deeper breakthrough by the enemy can be halted only in the rear, for example on the line of the Bol. Sestra River on both sides of Teryayevo. The link to the east to the northern extremity of the Istrinskoye Reservoir along the Nudol River and the link to the northwest along the Lama River. The 20th Panzer Division should be moved up to this sector. Other forces can be taken solely from the V Army Corps and the 3d Panzer Group. We will remain a certain time at this position.

We do not feel the situation can be held without the signing of reserves. They could be moved up via Gzhatsk to the northeast and north. It is impossible to move to the north to the east of Gzhatsk with the existing state of the roads. This inevitably would lead to blockages.

In conclusion it is essential to emphasize the seriousness of the supply situation. In recent days, not a single supply train has arrived and as a result the stores existing in the panzer group have been used. In the units these stores have been so reduced that new deliveries are indispensable. It must be feared that the movement of motorized transport will be stopped and the units will remain without ammunition.

Commander Hopner (signature)

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 162-164

**Telegraphed Operation Order From Staff of Army
Group Center**

Translated from German
Top Secret
11 December 1941

To 4th Army 9th Army

Due to the fact that in wintertime the supply for the troops positioned on the protruding section of the front in the area of Kalinin will be greatly impeded, it is essential to reconnoiter, designate and if possible prepare an alternate position along the line: Nara Ponds—Teryayevo—Osheykino—Gnezdovo—Spas-Dary—Podol....

The planned retreat to the previously prepared positions can be made only before the period of deep snow (before the beginning of January).

The time of the retreat will be given in a special order of the army group. It is essential as soon as possible to organize the removal of the food supplies existing in Kalinin.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 103-104

**Operation Order to the 2d Army and 2d Panzer Army
on Temporary Incorporation in the "Guderian Army
Group"**

Translated from German
Top Secret
12 December 1941

The 2d Army and the 2d Panzer Army are temporarily to be incorporated in the "Guderian Army Group." Thus, Col Gen Guderian will have under him: the 2d Army, 2d Panzer Army and the reserves which are in the sectors of both armies.

The mission for the Guderian Army Group: to halt the advance of the breaking-through enemy on the line: the area to the east of Kursk—Novosil—Aleksin.

The Command of the Guderian Army Group is to report its plans to the staff of the army group.

Supply is to be provided by the previous order.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheet 104

Note: Copies of this document have been forwarded to the 4th Army, the VIII Air Corps, Army Group South and to the Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Ground Forces

Telegram

From Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
Top Secret
15 December 1941

To 2d Army 2d Panzer Army 4th Army 9th Army 3d Panzer Group 4th Panzer Group Commander of Rear Area of Army Group Center Operations Directorate of General Staff of Ground Forces

1. Preparations of the rear positions being carried out according to the Order of the Staff of Army Group Center, No. 2950/41, Top Secret, of 9 December 1941, must be accelerated in such a manner as to be able to retreat to them in the immediate future. The retreat will be commenced only upon a special order of the army group....

2. On the particularly threatened sectors of the new forward edge as well as to the crossings over the Oka River, it is essential ahead of time to set up battle outposts which will receive the retreating troops.

3. All the rear services, parks and so forth as well as prisoners of war should be shifted as quickly as possible

to the rear and located not closer than the eastern edge of the rear area of the army group.

4. All the fortifications and dugouts located ahead of the new forward edge must be prepared for destruction. If there are not enough explosives to carry out this task, then it is possible to employ artillery and captured ammunition. Mines must also be employed in large numbers. All the preparatory measures to destroy and burn out the dugouts and fortifications ahead of the new forward edge (particularly those located along the road) should be carried out in such a manner that this task can be executed during the retreat of the troops to the new line. The time of the retreat to the new positions will be indicated in a special order.

5. The Directorate of the Quartermaster General Under the General Staff of the Ground Forces has been requested to shift the western boundary of the rear area of the army group to the line of:

Korop—course of the Desna River and the Sudost River to Pochep—Kletnya—Roslavl—the Roslavl—Smolensk Railroad—the rail spur 15 km to the east of Smolensk—Sloboda—Bayevo—Toropoa—Toropets (population points are included in the rear area of the army group).

From 20 December, the armies must organize security for the railroads and highways located in the new army areas. The army group is to pay particular attention to the serious importance of securing the lines of communications.

6. A special order follows concerning the use of construction formations for organizing the rear positions. The local population must be involved in this work.

Staff of Army Group Center

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 158, sheets 105-107

Telegram

From Staff of 4th Army

Translated from German
1435 hours of 17 December 1941

To the attention of the Staff of Army Group Center.

All corps and divisions must immediately and decisively ascertain all extra forces in the rear services, arm them and send them to the infantry divisions. The rear areas are swarming with well-rested, well-fed personnel who are in such short supply in the line units. In the rear formations personnel are standing around idly instead of fighting in the infantry ranks with weapons in hand.

I order all commanders immediately to ascertain such forces and employ them as infantry in following the example of the commandant of the rear area, Gen von Unruh, who successfully carried out these measures.

Signed by von Kluge

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 565, sheet 161

Telegram

To Staff of Army Group Center

Translated from German
1327 hours, 18 December 1941

On 20 December 1941, partially as a result of enemy pressure earlier, the troops are pulling back to the line of Ruza—Volokolamsk—Lama. An order has been given to hold this line. In this context I report the following:

1) The defensive line between Blagoveshchenskaya and Volokolamsk does not have any natural obstacles. It runs along open terrain and this requires the use of large forces.

2) At present, we cannot guarantee its holding on the northern flank of the IX Army Corps by the 252d Infantry Division which has been weakened by constant fighting and on the northern flank of the XLVI Army Corps by the 11th Panzer Division which suffered a defeat today.

3) The commanders of the XLV and V Corps have reported that with the existing width of their sectors of the front (around 24 km per corps) they cannot hold the front with their forces. In the course of the recent fighting, both these commanders have proven particularly well to be calm and reliable commanders.

4) The numerical strength of the units continues to decline and in recent years [there have been] great losses in weapons and transport which at times had to be destroyed due to a lack of fuel. The supply level of weapons is presently 25-30 percent.

5) There are no reserves for repelling the enemy which has broken through.

6) For this reason one can only issue the order "hold out to the last man." After this the unit is out of commission and a breach forms in the front line. All of this must be taken into account.

Signature Hopner

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 565, sheet 159

Telegram

From Staff of 4th Army

Translated from German
0020 hours, 19 December 1941

To Staff of Army Group Center

The Fuhrer prohibits a retreat. He has demanded that each commander and officer by personal example inspire the soldiers to fanatic resistance in their positions.

Orders have been issued by the superior command for the immediate movement of reinforcements and reserves by all possible means, including by air transport.

This order is to be issued to regimental commanders and so forth.

Staff of 4th Army, 1a No. 284/41, Secret

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 565, sheet 160

**Telephone Report From the 4th Panzer Group to
Commander of Army Group Center**

Translated from German
Secret
21 December 1941

After the Fuhrer's order I should again point to the seriousness of the condition of my troops which over more than 5 weeks have rushed into continuous assaults and defensive battles without shelters and equipped positions under hard winter conditions against a numerically superior enemy.

The adjacent armies to the right and left have not been subjected to these stresses to the same degree.

The effective strength has been so reduced that a division can be judged as a reinforced battalion. The shortage of commanders has told particularly badly. Under such conditions, the defensive line which runs across open terrain, [similar] to the one in the sector of the XLVI Panzer and V Army Corps, cannot be held.

The order requiring this will not change the situation if sufficient reserves and supplies are not provided. The completely insufficient fuel supply under the conditions of the very hard defensive fighting has already led to the destruction of a large amount of vehicles and weapons by our own troops.

The lack of ammunition prevents a defense to an intolerably greater degree, although the already weak artillery is the only support for the worn out weak troop units. The seriousness of this situation must be fully recognized. The demanded resistance is impossible for the unaided troops. Strong assaults are presently going on against the center of the V Army Corps to the northwest of Volokolamsk, as I had assumed and reported.

The order from above has prevented me from commanding my troops.

What is to happen if there are one or several breakthroughs? I request in addition, that I be informed of the major operational intentions.

Signed Hopner

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 160, sheets 1-2

[Report] From Commander of 4th Tank Army

Translated from German
Secret
24 December 1941

To Army Group Center

As of 20 December, partially as a consequence of the enemy push, the troops will be pulled back to the line: Ruza—Volokolamsk—Lama. Orders have been given to hold this line.

In this context I report the following:

1. The defensive line between Blagoveshchenskaya and Volokolamsk does not represent any difficulties [for organization].

2. At present, the occupying of it on the northern flank of the IX Army Corps has still not been secured due to the ongoing fighting in the sector of the 252d Infantry Division and on the northern flank of the XLVI Army Corps as a consequence of the frequent setbacks in the area of the 11th Panzer Division to the west of Denkovo.

3. The commanders...of the XLVI Tank and V Army Corps have reported that with the width of their combat zones (around 24 km for each corps) the line cannot be held with the insignificant number of troops.

In the recent fighting both commanders particularly distinguished themselves with their calm and confident command.

4. The fighting strength of the troops has declined further everywhere. In recent years a very large amount of weapons and motor vehicles has broken down and a large portion of them had to be destroyed due to the shortage of fuel. Our supply of weapons is presently 25-30 percent.

5. There are no reserves anywhere to repulse the enemy with a counterattack.

6. For this reason we can only order the holding of the front line to the last man. But after this the units will be completely useless. A breach will develop in the front. This must be expected.

Signature: Hopner

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 160, sheets 3-4

**[Report] From Commander of 4th Panzer Army
Telegraphed on 31 December 1941**

Translated from German
Secret

To Army Group Center

The enemy push in the sector of the V Army Corps is continuing as before. Regardless of the commitment of

the 6th Panzer Division to battle on this front, the enemy breakthrough to the northwest of Volokolamsk has not been eliminated.

Today the enemy has achieved new successes here. Our forces have been further depleted. The V Army Corps has received a completely insignificant reinforcement. There are no more reserves.

The enemy is moving up new forces here. For this reason, it will be impossible to check its push over any extended time.

The 9th Army has reported its intention to pull back its right flank to the line of Golitsyno—Starikovo. By this the supply base of the left flank (the V Army Corps and the 3d Panzer Group) will be threatened, as the only supply railroad runs parallel to this front at a distance of 10 km.

The pulling back of the 3d Panzer Army can also not be carried out successfully as its units, as was pointed out earlier, must use the Ramenye—Ulaynovskoye road through the sector of the 9th Army.

The situation in the sector of the 4th Army on the northern flank of which they should commit the sole reserve of the 4th Panzer Group—the Chevalier formation of the 10th Panzer Division—according to the information available to me is tense. With such a reinforcement, in my opinion, there must be a fundamental decision to immediately pull back the 4th Panzer Group.

Even under the condition of a sufficient amount of fuel, preparations for this would require several days. If these measures are not taken promptly, then we must figure on a large loss of personnel and forces and on the arrival of units unfit for battle at the Gzhatsk position.

Hopner

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 160, sheets 5-6

[Report] From Commander of 20th Panzer Division

Translated from German
Copy
Staff Division, Ruza,
5 January 1942

To the Commander of the 4th Panzer Army, Copy to the 4th Army, to the staff of the IX and XLVII Army Corps

The division over a period of several months, due to circumstances beyond its control, has been so dispersed that there can no longer be any question of an entire division or a command responsible for all the units of the division. All the possible official levels, including the commanders of the army rear area and the rear area of the ground forces, due to various circumstances and without the knowledge of the divisional commander, issued orders on all sorts of formations, and have demanded the retreat of individual units and which I

subsequently learned of as a consequence of communications difficulties largely from my own units and not from the commanders issuing the orders.

One of the panzer battalions which as a security unit (consisting of tank crews) was particularly poorly equipped for fighting, even before participating in it from the repeated moves...on the march had lost its supply trains. In these trains were the baggage and personal effects of the unit's [soldiers and officers].

The same must also explain the particularly high losses from frostbite which together with the losses of soldiers killed...over the last 4 weeks have reduced the strength of this battalion which consisted of irreplaceable experienced tank crews, according to the previous reports, from 450 men to 40.

Another security battalion (commander, Capt Romey) consisting of career personnel of the combined companies of the 59th and 112th Rifle Regiments of the 20th Panzer Division subordinate by a level unknown to me to the XLIII Army Corps has announced that two companies had been removed for reinforcing the infantry formations located there from the 31st Infantry Division.

All of these disorganized units with the constant change in subordination and the change in location have been unable to obtain mail which is partially located in the area of Yukhnov—Roslavl and partially in Smolensk.

I request that upon the end of the presently occurring fighting for the division, the tank army provide time and an opportunity to bring together all of these separate units subordinate to various command levels in order to re-establish the division. Only one small part of the division, as is shown in Appendix No. 1, is on the front at Ruza under my command.

Signed von Thoma

TsAMO, folio 500, inv. 12462, file 160, sheets 14-15

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Parade That Amazed the World

00010006d Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 89 (signed to press
29 Dec 88) pp 61-72

[Archival materials, published under the heading "From the Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense" compiled by V.V. Tarnov: "A Parade Which Amazed the World"]

[Text] On 7 November 1941, a troop parade was held in Moscow on Red Square in commemoration of the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It

was held under conditions when the Soviet units and formations were engaged in heavy defensive fighting against the Nazi invaders which were 70-100 km away from the capital.

The parade was reviewed by the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, MSU S.M. Budenny and the parade was under the command of the Commander of the Moscow Military District and Moscow Defense Zone, Lt Gen P.A. Artemyev.

The events of those days on Red Square have been depicted in military history literature and in memoirs. The most significant publications on this question can be found in the book "Sto voyennykh paradov" [One Hundred Military Parades] (Moscow, 1974), in the memoirs of the former military council member of the Moscow Military District and the Moscow Defense Zone, Lt Gen K.F. Telegain, "Ne otdali Moskvu" [Moscow Was Not Surrendered] (2d Edition, Moscow, 1975) and in the encyclopedia "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945 gg." [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945] (Moscow, 1985).

In a careful examination of these materials, one discovers contradictory data on the composition of the troops participating in the parade. For example, some materials assert that a ceremonial march through Red Square was made by a battalion of officer candidates from the School imeni Verkhovnyy Sovet RSFSR and the military political school of the MVO [Moscow Military District], and in others this information is absent. Nor is there unanimity on the names of the tank and other units.

In working in the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense, the author of the current article has set out to study all the documents which could contain information on the parade of 7 November 1941. Here it was considered that preparations for the parade were carried out in strict secrecy and one must not count on exhaustive documentation.

However, after studying hundreds of files from the staff of the MVO, the Moscow Defense District, the Directorate of the Military Commandant of the City of Moscow and others, it was possible to establish the names of all the troop units and formations participating in the parade, the names and military ranks of their commanders as well as trace the campaign record for a majority of them in the Great Patriotic War.

From the archival documents it was established that the officer candidates of the Military Infantry School imeni Verkhovnyy Sovet RSFSR and the Military Political School of the MVO did not participate in the parade. The officer candidate rifle regiment which was constituted from personnel of the former (112 officers, 1,330 officer candidates, 130 Red Armymen and 7 civilian employees) at that time was fighting the enemy on the Volokolamsk sector, and the school itself from 17 October through 15 November 1941 was being relocated to Novosibirsk.¹

The personnel of the Military Political School of the MVO from 17 October through 11 November 1941 were being completely relocated to the village of Ardatov in Gorkiy Oblast (now the worker settlement of Ardatov).²

It has also been established that participating in the parade were not two separate tank battalions of the Reserve of Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command], as has been stated in certain materials, but rather two tank brigades (31st and 33d). Moreover, the archival documents do not confirm that the troops which partook in the parade went directly from it into battle.

The military parade which was unprecedented in history, a parade which amazed the world, had an enormous impact on strengthening the moral and political state of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. The regiments which marched over Red Square vowed to the party and to the government and to all the multinational people of our motherland to turn the approaches to Moscow into a grave for the Nazi invaders.

The mood of the Soviet people was vividly expressed in Order for the 332d Ivanovo Rifle Division imeni M.V. Frunze of 6 November 1941, a regiment which participated in the parade: "...On the approaches to Moscow, in the name of our motherland, our mothers, sisters, brothers and children, we must rebuff the Nazi filth, destroy the enemy without sparing either our forces or lives. On us rests the responsible and honorable task of defending and protecting Moscow. Moscow should become and will be the grave of Nazism."

The parade shattered the mad ideas of Hitler concerning a parade of German troops on Red Square in conquered Moscow. The Nazis, as is known, did march through the streets of our capital, but not over Red Square and not as victors but as prisoners on 17 July 1944. More than 57,000 captured Nazi generals, officers and soldiers were escorted across Moscow.

Not only in our nation but also abroad people were convinced of how great were the confidence and determination of the Soviet people to defend Moscow, to rout the crack Nazi troops on the approaches to the capital and dispel the myth of the invincibility of the Nazi Army.

Some 3 1/2 years later, in May 1945, the Nazi Reich was overthrown. And the herald of the future victory was that unforgettable parade on Red Square on the harsh and terrible day of the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The archival documents published here for the first time on the parade of our troops on Red Square on 7 November 1941 are vivid confirmation of this.

No. 1

TROOP PARADE ON RED SQUARE*

On 7 November on Red Square in Moscow, a traditional Red Army troop parade was held.... The clock on the Spasskaya Tower solemnly tolled 8 o'clock.

"Parade, attention!"

Riding out from the gates of Spasskaya Tower on a white prancing steed was the USSR People's Commissar of Defense, MSU, Comrade Budenny. Galloping to meet him was the commander of the parade, Lt Gen, Comrade Artemyev.

Having received the report, Comrade Budenny escorted by the lieutenant general reviewed the troops formed up for the parade and congratulated them. The men responded to the greetings of the marshal of the Soviet Union with a cheerful "Hurrah!" Having completed the review, Comrade Budenny rode up to the Mausoleum, he alighted agilely from his mount and went up to the rostrum.

A solemn silence set in. Loudspeakers broadcast over the square the precise, clear words of Comrade Stalin....

The solemn march of the units began. In opening the solemn review, marching past the Mausoleum in a precise and even pace were officer candidates from the artillery school. The battalions of sailors were greeted with loud applause. Then came the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] troops, battalions of infantry and rifle subunits. Commanders and political workers marched smartly in front. In concluding the solemn march-by, passing in front of the Mausoleum were detachments of armed workers from the city of Moscow, offspring of the glorious militia man of the Russian land, Kuzma Minin. They were armed with rifles, submachine guns and light machine guns. They were ready today to move out to the battle lines, and fight to the last drop of blood for their city, for their great fatherland.

The cavalry entered the square. Behind the squadrons rumbled the horse-drawn machine gun mounts, causing loud applause from the viewers. Motorized infantry passed by. Motor vehicles with antiaircraft mounts rolled silently by.

The Kremlin chimes melodiously struck 0900 hours in the morning, and the artillery was still crossing the square. Antiaircraft, antitank, heavy....

In concluding the march of Soviet military equipment, the square was filled with tanks. With the passage of the tanks the parade was over....

TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense], folio 202, inv. 76, file 1, sheet 74 (copy).

No. 2

INFORMATION REPORT

On the Number of Troops From the Moscow Garrison Assigned for the Operation

I. Personnel

1) Infantry (69 battalions)	—19,044 men
2) Armed Workers (20 battalions)	—5,520 men
3) Cavalry (6 saber squadrons, 1 gun mount squadron)	—546 men
4) Riflemen, machine gun units (5 battalions)	—732 men
5) Artillery (140 guns)	—2,165 men
6) Tanks (160 [units])	—480 men

Total: 28,487 [men]

II. Equipment

1) Horse-drawn mounts	—16 units
2) Machine guns	—296 units
3) Mortars	—18 units
4) Antiaircraft machine guns	—12 units
5) Weapons: small caliber	—12 units
—medium power	—128 units
—large power	—**
6) Tanks: BT-7	—70 units
—T-60	—48 units
—T-34	—40 units
—KV	—2 units
7) Vehicles	—232 units

The troops are to be formed up over a period of 20 minutes. Forming up is to be completed 15 minutes before start.

The units are to move out in such a manner that, without halts, they are to arrive at the square not earlier than 35 minutes and not later than 15 minutes before the start of the operation.

Commandant of City of Moscow Maj Gen Sinilov

TsAMO, folio 141671, file 17, sheets 10, 10 verso

No. 3

ROUTES AND ARRIVAL TIME OF UNITS PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION

Approved, MVO Commander, Lt Gen Artemyev

1. MAU [Moscow Artillery School]³

—Khoroshevskoye Highway, 1905 Street, Krasnopresnenskaya Gate, Krasnaya Presnya Street, Barrikadnaya Street, Vosstaniye Square, Herzen Street, Mokhovaya

Street, Manezhnaya Square, Kremlin Passage, Red Square. Arrival time 20 minutes before start of operation.

2. Detachment of Sailors⁴

—Frunze Square, Lev Tolstoy Street, Zubovskaya Square, Kropotkinskaya Street, Znamenskiy B. Lane, Antipyevskiy Lane, Mokhovaya Street, Manezhnaya Square, Kremlin Passage, Red Square. Arrival time 25 minutes before start of operation.

3. MKVD Troops

—1st OMSDON⁵—Pokrovka Street, Maroseyka Street, Kuybyshev [Street], Red Square. Arrival time 35 minutes before start of operation.

—2d OMSDON⁶—assembly point—Nogin Square. Route to Red Square: Kitayskiy Prospect, Moskvoretskaya Quay, Moskvoretskaya Street, Red Square. Arrival time 25 minutes before start of operation.

4. Battalion of MVO Military Council⁷

—Krasnokazarmennaya Street, Radio Street, Kazakov Street, Pokrovka Street, Maroseyka Street, Kitayskiy Prospect, Dzerzhinskiy Square, Teatralnyy Prospect, Okhotnyy Ryad Square, Manezhnaya Square, Kremlin Passage. Arrival time 18 minutes before start of operation.

5. 332d Rifle Division

—Katuarovskoye Highway, Leninskaya Sloboda, Warsaw Highway, Tulska B. Street, Serpukhovskaya Gate, Mytnaya Street, Oktyabrskaya Square, B. Yakimanka Street, Kamennyy Bridge, Manezhnaya Street, Kremlin Passage. Arrival time 17 minutes before start of operation.

6. Air Defense Regiment

—Regiment assembly point—Chernyshevskiy Barracks. Route to formation place for operation: Mytnaya Street, Oktyabrskaya Square, B. Yakimanka Street, Kamennyy Bridge, Manezhnaya Street, Manezhnaya Square, Historical Museum Passage. Arrival time 35 minutes before start of operation.

7. Moscow Division⁸

—Assembly point for units involved in operation on foot, at Commune Square. Route to forming up place for operation: Samotechnaya Street, Samotechnaya Square, Tsvetnoy Boulevard, Trubnaya Square, Neglinnaya Street, Sverdlov Square, Revolution Square. Arrival time 35 minutes before start of operation.

8. Detachment of Armed Workers

—Assembly point—Tsvetnoy Boulevard. Route to forming-up place for operation: Trubnaya Square, Neglinnaya Street, Sverdlov Square, Revolution Square. Arrival time 35 minutes before start of operation.

9. NKVD Cavalry Regiment

—Khoroshevskoye Highway, Begovaya Street, Leningrad Highway, Gorkiy Street, Sadovo-Triumfalnaya Street, Sadovo-Karetnaya [Street], Karetnyy Row, Petrovka Street, Okhotnyy Ryad Square. Arrival time 35 minutes before start of operation.

10. Composite Rifle-Machine Gun Motorized Regiment

—Regimental assembly point—Frunze Square. Route to forming-up place: Lev Tolstoy Street, Zubovskaya Square, Kropotkinskaya Street, Kropotkinskaya Square and so forth.

LEFT COLUMN

—Gogolevskiy Boulevard, Nikitskiy Boulevard, Tverskoy Boulevard, Pushkin Square to the right along Gorkiy Street. Form up in a column of three vehicles along left side of street, head of column at Okhotnyy Ryad.

RIGHT COLUMN

—B. Znamenskiy Lane, Manezhnaya Street. Form up in column of three vehicles, head of column at bend in Aleksandrovskiy Garden in front of Kremlin Passage.

Form-up time—35 minutes before start of operation.

11. NKVD Artillery Regiment

—Assembly point of regiment—Devichye Pole Prospect, opposite Academy imeni Frunze. Route of march to form-up place: Kropotkinskaya Street, Kropotkinskaya Square and further.

LEFT COLUMN

—Gogolevskiy Boulevard, Nikitskiy Boulevard, Tverskoy Boulevard to the right on Gorkiy Street. Form up in column of three guns in tail of composite rifle machine gun motorized regiment.

RIGHT COLUMN

—B. Znamenskiy Lane, Antipyevskiy Lane, Manezhnaya Street. Form up in column of three guns in tail of right column of rifle-machine gun motorized regiment.

Form-up time—30 minutes before start of operation.

12. Artillery Regiment of MSD⁹

—Bakhmetevskaya Street, Borba Square, Palikha Street, Novoslobodskaya Street, Kalyayevskaya Street, to the right along the Sadovoye Ring to Mayakovskiy Square and further.

LEFT COLUMN

—Gorkiy Street. Form up in column of three vehicles in tail of column of NKVD artillery regiment.

RIGHT COLUMN

—Along Sadovoye Ring to Vosstaniye Square, Vorovskiy Street, Frunze Square, Manezhnaya Street. Form up along Aleksandrovskiy Garden in column of three guns in tail of NKVD artillery regiment.

Form-up time—25 minutes before start of operation.

13. Tank Column

—Leningrad Highway, Gorkiy Street. Form up in column of three tanks (heavy in two tanks) in such a manner that the motor vehicles and artillery columns can pass through you. Head of tank column is to stop on level of the Moscow Soviet.

Form-up time—2 hours before start of operation.

Commandant of the City of Moscow, Maj Gen Sinilov

TsAMO, inv. 141671, file 17, sheets 19-23

No. 4

Time Schedule

Approved Commander of MVO, Lt Gen Artemyev

1. Review of troops,—5 min.
 2. Speech,—5 min.
 3. Salute,—1 min. 20 sec.
 4. [Movement] of infantry,—30 min.
 5. [Movement] of cavalry,—5 min.
 6. [Movement] of artillery on mechanical traction,—5 min.
 7. [Movement] of tanks,—10 min.
- 1 hour 1 min. 20 sec.

Commandant of City of Moscow Maj Gen Sinilov

No. 5

Departure Route

Approved Commander of MVO, Lt Gen Artemyev

1. MAU

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, Kremlin Quay, Frunze Street, Arbatskaya Square, Vorovskiy Street, Vosstaniye Square, Barrikadnaya Street, Krasnopresnenskaya Gate, 1905 Street, Vagankovskiy Bridge, Khoroshevskoye Highway.

2. Detachment of Sailors

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, Kremlin Quay, Lenivka Street, Volkhonka Street, B. Antipyevskiy Lane, Kropotkinskaya Street, Zubovskaya Street, Lev Tolstoy Street, Frunze Square.

3. NKVD Troops

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, to the left under arch of Moskvoretskiy Bridge, Moskvoretskaya Quay, Yauzskiy Boulevard, Pokrovskiy Boulevard.

4. Battalions of MVO Military Council

—Red Square, Razin Street, Nogin Square, Serov Prospect, Maroseyka Street, Zemlyanoy Val Street, Kazakov Street, Radio Street, Krasnokazarmennaya Street.

5. 332d Rifle Division

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, Kremlin Quay, Kammennyy Bridge, B. Yakimanka Street, Oktyabrskaya Square, Mytnaya Street, Serpukhovskaya Gate, B. Tuskaya Street, Warsaw Highway, Leninskaya Sloboda, Katuarovskoye Highway.

6. Air Defense Regiment

—Red Square, Moskvoretskiy Bridge, B. Ordynka Street, Lyusinovskaya Street, Zemlyanaya Street, Danilovskiy Market Square, Chernyshevskiy Barracks.

7. Moscow Division

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, left flank companies along Razin Street and Nogin Square, right flank companies under arch of Moskvoretskiy Bridge via Kitayskiy Prospect to Nogin Square, Serov Prospect, Dzerzhinskiy Square, Rozhdestvenka Street, Trubnaya Square, Tsvetnoy Boulevard, Samotechnaya Square, Commune Square.

8. Detachment of Armed Workers

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, and then along the Kremlin and Moskovoretskaya Quays to their own rayons by the shortest route, preventing head-on encounter with units coming from Red Square.

9. NKVD Cavalry Regiment

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, to the left under arch of Moskovoretskiy Bridge, Moskvoretskaya Quay, Kitayskiy Prospect, Nogin Square, Serov Prospect, Dzerzhinskiy Square, Teatralnyy Prospect, Petrovka Street, Karetnyy Row, to the left along the Sadovoye Ring, Leningrad Highway, Begovaya Street, Khoroshevskoye Highway.

10. Composite Rifle-Machine Gun Motorize Regiments, Artillery Regiment of NKVD and Artillery Regiment of Moscow Rifle Division

LEFT SIDE

—Istoricheskiy Prospect, Krasnaya Square, Moskvoretskiy Bridge, B. Ordynka, Dobryninskaya Square, and then along the Sadovoye Ring to billeting area.

RIGHT SIDE

—Kremlin Passage, Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, to the left under arch of Moskvoretskiy Bridge, Moskvoretskaya Quay to Krasnokholmskiy Bridge, to the left along Narodnaya Street to the Sadovoye Ring and then along the Sadovoye Ring to the billeting area.

11. Tank Column

—Red Square, Vasilyevskiy Grade, Kremlin Quay, Frunze Street, Arbatskaya Square, Vorovskiy Street, Vosstaniye Square, to the right along the Sadovoye Ring, Mayakovskiy Square, to the left on Leningrad Highway.

Note: No reformation is to be permitted nearer than the Arbatskaya Square.

Commandant of City of Moscow, Maj Gen Sinilov

TsAMO, inv. 141671, file 17, sheets 6-8

No. 6 PERSONNEL STATUS RECORD For Units of Moscow Rifle Division Participating in Parade on 4 November 1941

Unit Name	Personnel		Rank-and-File	Total	Motor Vehicles	Cannons	Mortars	Machine Guns	Rifles
	Superior	Junior							
2d Rifle Regiment	39	54	452	545	—	—	—	—	506
3d Rifle Regiment	68	293	1373	1734	—	—	—	38	1402
4th Rifle Regiment	25	48	480	553	—	—	—	—	528
Comp Art Reg	43	44	724	811	49	48	—	—	200
Light Art Reg	43	51	456	550	32	36	—	—	233
Howitzer Art Reg	48	120	636	804	40	36	—	—	144
Sep AA Art Btl	8	32	140	180	8	8	—	—	—
AA Mach Gun Btl	7	12	83	102	15	—	—	15	65
Comp Mach Gun Reg	17	34	287	338	24	—	—	96	112
Mortar Btl	4	8	35	47	7	—	18	—	31
Sep Sigs Btl	5	22	110	137	4	—	—	—	132
Sep Comb Engr Btl	7	12	120	139	—	—	—	—	132
Medical Btl	31	11	40	82	15	—	—	—	44
Total:	345	741	4936	6022	194	128	18	149	3529

Division Chief of Staff,

Lt Col Nizhegorodov

Division Staff Commissar,

Btl Commissar Furov

Chief of 4th Squad, Capt Polyakov

TsAMO, inv. 141671, file 17, sheet 48

No. 7

From the Combat Log of the 129th Rifle Division¹⁰

By an enormous effort the division in the shortest time was able to achieve a coordinating of the subunits, drill and military discipline, gaining at this price the right to participate in the military parade on Red Square on 7 November 1941....

On 7 November 1941, the soldiers, commanders and political workers of our formation formed up in front of the Historical Museum.

The division marched across Red Square, demonstrating its readiness to go after the enemy. The units went directly from the parade to their defensive lines and firing positions:

—The divisional staff and the 4th Rifle Regiment—Bakhmetyevskaya Street, No. 15 (the plant of the MIIT [Moscow Institute for Rail Transport Engineers]);

—1st Rifle Regiment—moved up to the defenses in the area of Razdory, Odintsovo, Gorodnyakha, Petrushino;

- 2d Rifle Regiment—took up the defensive on the Lenin Hills;
- 3d Rifle Regiment and the LAP [Light Artillery Regiment]—Novosushchevskaya 26;
- The Howitzer Regiment—to the firing position in the area of Kutuzovskaya Sloboda;
- The Separate Signals Battalion, the Separate Combat Engineers Battalion and the Medical Battalion—to the building of the People's Commissariat of the Lumber Industry (Borba Square).

TsAMO, folio 1348, inv. 1, file 14, sheets 4, 5

Note. The division fought its way from Klin to Berlin. In August 1944, for the capturing of Belostok it was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and for breaching the enemy defenses to the north of Warsaw, the Order of Kutuzov 2d Degree. The division was awarded the honorific designator Orel. For successful fighting a commendation of the Supreme High Command was made three times for the personnel of the division. It ended the war on 8 May 1945 on the Elbe.

No. 8

From the Historical Service Record of the 332d Rifle Division

Constitution of Division

In meeting the requests of the workers in the city of Ivanovo and Ivanovo Oblast, the State Defense Committee [GKO] on 24 July 1941 handed down a decree to constitute the Ivanovo Rifle Division and for perpetuating the name of the great military leader of the Civil War to give it the name of M.V. Frunze.

By the Order of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] No. 0310 of 20 August 1941, the division was awarded the name "332d Ivanovo Rifle Division imeni M.V. Frunze."

- The division commenced its constituting under the Directive of the MVO Commander, No. 106069 of 18 August 1941 in Ivanovo during the period of the most intense fighting against Nazi Germany, when the enemy was pushing toward Moscow and toward other vitally important industrial centers of our nation.
- Due to the great concern of the oblast party and soviet organizations in Ivanovo Oblast, joining the fighting ranks of the division were the finest sons of the oblast, the carriers of the glorious fighting traditions of the Ivanovo weavers who routed the White Guard during the period of the Civil War under the leadership of M.V. Frunze. Scores of the best party workers from the oblast were sent to leadership work in the division's units. Hundreds of communists and Komsomol members rallied together and turned them into strong fighting units.

—With great enthusiasm and at a rapid pace the Ivanovo Division was organized and developed from workers of Ivanovo and the rayons of Ivanovo Oblast: Shuyskiy, Savinskiy, Kovrovskiy, Nikolo-Gorskiy, Vyaznikovskiy, Yuzhskiy, Palekhskiy, Vichugskiy, Kineshemskiy, Aleksandrovskiy, Sabinskiy, Pestyakovskiy, Vladimirskiy, Seredskiy, Novolokskiy, Yuryev-Polskiy, Gavrilovo-Posadskiy, Kokhmanskiy, Teykovskiy and others.

—During the period of constituting, the division's units worked hard on combat and political training, preparing themselves for the coming battles against the Nazis. Here the party and soviet organizations of Ivanovo Oblast provided great aid. Because of the delayed delivery of weapons to the division, there was a possible interruption in combat training. The party obkom mobilized all the weapons of the training centers and turned them over to the division for training the troops.

—By 26 September 1941, the division under the leadership of the division's commander, Col, Comrade Knyazkov, and the division's commissar, Reg Commissar, Comrade Loskutov, had completed its combat training and had become a major fighting unit consisting of three infantry regiments and one artillery regiment, three special battalions and one anti-aircraft battalion as well as several separate companies and platoons.

—The division's units in constituting were located in the surroundings of Ivanovo. The 1115th Rifle Regiment, the 1117th Rifle Regiment, the anti-aircraft gunners and the medical battalion...in Novo-Talitskiy Park, The 1119th Rifle Regiment in the Kharinka Camp, The 891st Artillery Regiment in the Kuvayevskiy Forest, The division staff in Ivanovo, Dzerzhinskiy Street, School No. 22.

—September arrived. The danger hanging over the motherland was becoming more and more terrible. The Nazi hordes were continuing to push ever-deeper into our fatherland. The situation dictated the need in the maximum short time to provide the Red Army with maximally trained and well armed reserves.

—From 4 September 1941, hard regular training got underway in the division's units. Exercises were conducted in the field under conditions reminiscent of actual combat, with a maximum straining of forces and this helped the division in the future to successfully carry out the tasks set for it.

—On 10 October 1941, in carrying out the order of the MVO, the division embarked into trains and left to defend the closest southwestern approaches to Moscow and by the end of the day of 24 October 1941 occupied the defensive line of Krasnoye, Chertanovo, Tsaritsyno, Broshlevo.

—By this time the division in terms of its party-Komsomol and social composition looked as follows: Members (candidates) of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)]—24.4 percent of the total personnel; Komsomol members—3.5 percent; Nonparty persons—67.1 percent; Workers—65.0 percent; Kolkhoz members—20.0 percent; White collar personnel—12.3 percent; Other—2.7 percent.

—With the aid of the Moscow workers, the division quickly organized on its line defensive structures which blocked the enemy's way to the capital of our motherland.

—Along with the enormous work related to the engineer organization of the defensive zone, the division was steadily engaged in military and political training.

—For the good work of the division in strengthening the defensive line and for the high indicators of combat skill, the division was awarded the honor to participate in the historic parade on Red Square in Moscow on 7 November 1941.

—During the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the soldiers and commissars of the Ivanovo Division demonstrated their forces, their will for victory, their dedication to the motherland and to great Stalin before the Kremlin walls together with other famous soldiers of the Red Army.

—On 20 December 1941, on the basis of the order of the commander of the Moscow Defensive Zone of 19 December 1941, the division's units entered a new area following the route of Moscow, Kirmy, Likhoslavl, Torzhok, Ostashkovo.

—The division made the 400-km march between Moscow and Ostashkovo under roadless conditions, during heavy frosts and snowstorms and following on the heels of recent fierce clashes with the enemy. A snowstorm blocked the roads, the motor transport could not move, the horses were exhausted but the intrepid Ivanovo soldiers were not stopped by any difficulties, they helped the vehicles and the horses and by 26 December 1941, in becoming part of the 4th Assault Army, they had concentrated in the Ostashkovo area and in the adjacent villages of Zaselye, Nikolskoye, Zameshye. The division's regiments were concentrated on the eastern bank of Lake Seliger.

—While waiting for the operation order, the Ivanovo soldiers did not waste a single hour, they constantly prepared themselves for the coming fighting, and drilled themselves in the techniques of moving on the battlefield, in crossing wire obstacles, minefields, firing and throwing grenades.

TsAMO, folio 1646, inv. 1, file 3, sheets 3-6

Note. After the Battle of Moscow, the division participated in the liberation of Belorussia and the Baltic. It

was awarded the honorific designator of Polotsk and received the Order of Suvorov 2d Degree.

No. 9

ORDER

Of the 332d Ivanovo Rifle Division Imeni M.V. Frunze,
No. 196

6 November 1941, Moscow

No 196

Comrade Red Armymen, commanders and political workers, I congratulate you on the great proletarian holiday, the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The 24th anniversary of the Great Proletarian Revolution is being celebrated by the Soviet people under conditions of the Patriotic War against German Naziism.

The evil and cruel enemy covets our wealth, it wishes to take from us all that we have achieved and built, it wishes to turn the free sons of the Soviet people into mute slaves of the German barons and wishes to destroy, annihilate our people.

The Nazi bandits at a price of enormous losses have seized a portion of our territory and are threatening the vital centers of our motherland. They have deprived millions of people of the opportunity to celebrate freely the day of the Great October Socialist Revolution with the remaining workers of our nation.

For 5 months the Red Army with the greatest heroism and courage, and sparing neither blood nor lives, has repulsed the fierce pressure of the Nazi bands. However, the situation as before is tense and the danger great. The enemy pressure is growing but simultaneously the force of our resistance is growing along the entire front.

Together with the valorous Red Army the entire Soviet people have risen to fight the German Nazi invaders. We are fighting for our honor and freedom, for the happiness of our people.

Comrade Red Armymen, commanders and political workers! The blood-thirsty Nazis are in a hurry, and they realize that each lost day brings them closer to death, and we must not delay. On the approaches to Moscow, for the sake of our motherland, our mothers, sisters, brothers and children, having repulsed the Nazi filth, we must destroy the enemy sparing neither our forces nor lives.

On us rests the responsible and very honorable task of defending and protecting Moscow. Moscow should be and will be the grave of Naziism. This depends on us ourselves, upon our determination, energy, organization, solidarity and the steadfastness of our ranks. We firmly believe in the victory of our just cause. The enemy cannot shatter the steadfastness of the Muscovites, Leningraders and all the workers of the Soviet Union.

Our socialist motherland will be purged of the Nazi invaders.

Forward against the enemy. Death to Naziism.

Long live our beautiful Moscow.

Long live the Red Army and Navy.

Long live the 24th anniversary of the 24th October Socialist Revolution.

Long live the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), the party of Lenin and Stalin, the organizer of the fight for victory over the Nazi invaders.

Long live the leader and organizer of the socialist victories, Comrade Stalin.

Division Commander
Col Knyazkov

Division Commissar
Reg Commissar Koskutov

Chief of Staff, Maj Kolobutin

TsAMO, folio 1646, inv. 2, file 37, sheet 178

No. 10

Operations Summary No. 31. Staff of 332d Division. Katuarovskoye Highway No. 16a 1900 Hours, 7 November 1941 Map 50,000—40

1. The 332d Rifle Division, in occupying the defensive in the zone of the previous boundaries, continued during the day to work on the defenses; direct combat security was provided for the units occupying the defensive areas. On the main sectors PO [forward detachment] No. 1 in the area of Gorodnyakha—Dorzhzhino and PO No. 2 in the area of the road junction 2 km Sv. Petrovskaya and simultaneously in the positions of the units and along the roads reinforced patrolling has been set out.

2. The 1115th Rifle Regiment¹¹—from 0800 hours on 7 November 1941, the 2d and 3d Rifle Battalions and the Composite Company of Submachine Gunners entered Red Square in Moscow to participate in the parade; by 1600 hours, these units had returned fully to their former defensive areas.

The 1117th Rifle Regiment during the day of 7 November 1941 completed the digging of the trenches and communications trenches and camouflaging by 100 per cent.

The 1119th Rifle Regiment worked on clearing the trenches and communications trenches of snow completing 1,695 linear m, it set 400 linear m of wire obstacles in two rows. Some 150 hedgehogs and knife rests were set. Seventeen cast iron heating stoves were installed in the earthwork dugouts.

3. During the day there were no extended signals failures with the units.

The 779th Separate Signals Battalion was assigned a pigeon depot with 50 pigeons and 5 service personnel.

Chief of Staff Maj Kolobutin Staff Commissar Sr Polit Instr Kondratyev Deputy Chief of 1st Squad Maj Pisarev

No. 11

From Brief Historical Information on 31st Tank Brigade

The 31st Tank Brigade was constituted on the Southwestern Front in the area of Akhtyrka. In October 1941, it was relocated to Kubinka and then to Vladimir.

On 4 November 1941, the 31st Tank Brigade was ordered to concentrate in Moscow.

On 7 November 1941, the brigade participated in the historic parade on Red Square in Moscow.

From 12 through 14 November 1941, having made a 150-km march under its own power, as part of the II Guards Cavalry Corps, it participated in fighting in the area of Popovka, Borovo, Kremenki, Yekaterinovka, Moleyevo. On 17 November 1941, it was relocated to the area of Klin, where it became part of the 20th Army of the Western Front.

TsAMO, folio 3114, inv. 1, file 19, sheet 51; file 2, sheet 1; inv. 2, file 1a

Note. In January 1944, for distinguishment in the fighting for Kirov, it was given the honorific designator Kirovograd. On February 1944, for the exemplary execution of the assignments of the command, in the fighting for the capture of Zvenigorodka, it was awarded the Order of the Red Banner, in April 1944, for the crossing of the Dnestr River and for the capturing of Beltsy, it was awarded the Order of Suvorov, 2d Degree. In July 1944, for the capture of Vilnius it received its second Order of the Red Banner. The brigade ended the war in the Berlin area.

No. 12

To the Commandant of the City of Moscow, Maj Gen, Comrade Sinilov

The 31st Tank Brigade which has arrived at the end of the day of 4 November 1941 has the following effectives:

1. KV	4 units, 20 men
2. BT-7	9 units, 27 men
3. T-26 single-turret	10 units, 30 men
4. GAZ vehicles	30 units, 550 men
5. 57-mm antitank cannons	7 units, 42 men
6. 25-mm antiaircraft cannons	8 units, 48 men

Total 707 men

Commander of 31st Tank Brigade Col Kravchenko
Brigade Military Commissar Sr Btlm Commissar Sheleg
Chief of Staff of 31st Tank Brigade Lt Col Rabinovich

TsAMO, inv. 141671, file 17, sheet 47

No. 13

From a Description of the Campaign Record of the 33d Tank Brigade

On 7 September 1941, in the city of Kharkov, the 33d Tank Brigade was constituted from the disbanded 12th Tank Division.

Having been constituted, the brigade was moved to Vladimir in Ivanovo Oblast, where for a month it conducted combat training.

The brigade was constituted by Lt Col N.D. Chukhin, Btlm Commissar Medvedev and chief of staff, Maj V.V. Korotkov.

By the end of October 1941, the brigade was moved to Moscow, where it received its combat equipment and continued to improve the combat skills of the personnel....

The 33d Tank Brigade also participated in the solemn military parade of the Soviet troops on the Red Square in the city of Moscow on the day of the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, 7 November 1941.

After the parade, the brigade received its operation order to defend the approaches to the capital....

On 18 November, the brigade was concentrated in the area of Novo-Petrovskoye and was subordinate to the commander of the 16th Army, Lt Gen K.K. Rokossovskiy....

At Moscow, the brigade fought as part of the Soviet troops who ground down the German armies on the approaches to Moscow and ensured their defeat....

On 30 November 1941, the brigade went to Moscow for reorganization.

TsAMO, folio 3153, inv. 1, file 2, sheets 16, 17, 18

Note. On 15 August 1943, the 33d Tank Brigade became the 57th Guards Tank Brigade. For combat excellence in September 1943, the brigade was awarded the honorific designator Nezhin and for the crossing of the Oder River in the Breslau area received the Order of Kutuzov, 2d Degree. It ended the war in Czechoslovakia near Prague.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 60047, inv. 35094, file 1, sheet 7.

2. Ibid., inv. 511017, file 1, sheet 89.

* From the front newspaper NA RAZGROM VRAGA, 8 November 1941.

** As this in document.

3. First Moscow Artillery School imeni L.B. Krasin.

4. Detachment commander, Col A.M. Smirnov, military commissar, Btlm Commissar F.D. Vladimirov, chief of staff, Maj V.P. Kononov.

5. Separate Special-Purpose Motorized Rifle Division of USSR NKVD.

6. The same.

7. One battalion came to the parade. Battalion commander, Maj Epelgrad, military commissar, Btlm Commissar Petrov, chief of staff, Sr Lt Yefremov.

8. 2d Moscow Rifle Division, from January 1942, 129th Rifle Division (second reorganization).

9. Artillery regiment of the 2d Moscow Rifle Division did not have a number.

10. Constituted in September 1941 as a people's militia division, and in November was renamed the 2d Moscow Rifle Division and the latter on 19 January 1942 was renamed the 129th Rifle Division (second reorganization).

11. Regimental commander, Col I.Ya. Kulagin, military commissar, Sr Polit Instr A.K. Rayev, chief of staff, Capt V.P. Marchukov. (TsAMO, folio 1646, inv. 1, file 12, sheet 38.)

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Planning Mistakes

00010006e Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 89 (signed to press 29 Dec 88) pp 78-85

[Article, published under the heading "Incomplete Operations," by Lt Gen L.M. Sorochenko, candidate of military sciences, professor: "Planning Mistakes (Rear Support for the Vyazma Airborne Operation)"]

[Text] In exercises of the air forces of the Moscow Military District [MVO] for the first time in the world on 2 August 1930 there was the successful drop in the "enemy" rear of a small parachute force and equipment for it. This date is usually considered the birthday of the Soviet Airborne Troops [VDV].¹ In the following years there was rapid growth of the VDV: they established air-landed motor vehicle detachments, airborne battalions, regiments and special-purpose brigades.² Simultaneously they organized the experimental and then mass

domestic production of parachutes, heavy duty supply-dropping containers, pallets for heavy equipment, suspended cabins for airborne troops and materiel and gliders. In 1938, the VDV were taken away from the Air Forces and became part of the Ground Troops.³

On the eve of the war, in May 1941, on the basis of the airborne brigades (vdbr) they began organizing five airborne corps with over 8,000 men in each. Their manning was complete by 1 June, however the corps did not fully obtain the TOE weapons, equipment and landing gear. Since there was no military transport aviation, they used as transport aircraft the TB-1, TB-3 and R-5 bombers as well as civil aviation aircraft such as the ANT-9, ANT-14, PS-84 and P-5.

The questions of conducting airborne operations were taken up in the provisional 1936 Field Manual and in the Draft Regulation on the Conduct of Operations. These documents described only in the most general form the questions of rear support for the airborne troops. The draft of the 1941 Field Manual and the first Manual on the Combat Employment of Airborne Troops examined more widely the questions of planning airborne operations and their rear support.

According to the prewar views, the preparation of the assault force's rear included the supplying of the subunits, units and formations with personnel, weapons, equipment, parachute supplies and packaging, ammunition, fuel, food, other materiel as well as the drilling in loading the equipment in the heavy duty supply-dropping container (PDT), loading them into the aircraft and unloading them, a thorough examination of the area of the forthcoming operations and the corresponding training for the personnel of the military transport aviation (VTA).

Not all the measures of preparing the VDV and VTA had been completed by the moment of the attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union. The start of the war caught the airborne corps (vdk) in a stage of organization and development. The difficult situation on the front forced the Soviet Command to engage them in battle as rifle formations. At the same time, small tactical airborne forces were employed in the defensive engagements of the first period of the war in the fighting at Kiev, Odessa and on the Kerch Peninsula.

Under the order of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] of 4 September 1941, the airborne troops became an independent combat arm. All their units and formations were shifted from the fronts and put directly under the Directorate of the Command of the Airborne Troops. The Regulation Concerning the VDV as announced in the order established that all of the paratrooper, landing and airborne glider units would be at the disposal of the people's commissar of defense and used only with his permission according to the specific purpose.⁴

Over 50 tactical and 2 operational airborne forces were dropped and landed during the years of the war. Of the greatest interest was the Vyazma Airborne Operation. The fighting of the VDV in it has been described in sufficient detail in the historical, memoir and fiction literature. However, the authors in their book have taken up only in passing the questions of rear support. The given article attempts to some degree to make up for this gap.

The Vyazma Airborne Operation (27 January—24 June 1942) began in the concluding stage of the offensive by the Western and Kalinin Fronts conducted after the counteroffensive at Moscow, when enemy resistance was building up and the rate of advance of our troops was dropping. In the aim of assisting the fronts in defeating the Vyazma-Rzhev-Yukhnov Nazi troop grouping, Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command] decided to drop an airborne force in the enemy rear.

The VDV Staff with the participation of the Air Forces Staff by 16 January 1942 had worked out a plan for the airborne operation of the IV vdk (commander, Maj Gen A.F. Levashov). The questions of rear support for the assault forces were virtually not taken up in it.

The landing of the IV vdk (8th, 9th, 214th vdbr and other units) was to be carried out from the Kaluga Airfield Center to the area of Vyazma. As it was assumed that the independent combat of the corps formations in the enemy rear would not last more than 2 or 3 days and after this they would link up with the advancing troops of the Western Front, neither the VDV Staff nor the staff of the Western Front had worked out a rear support plan prior to the start of the airborne assault.

However, the operation lasted almost 5 months.

The surprise element for the landing was not achieved. The concentrating of the IV vdk and the vta close to the front line went on for an unacceptably long time under daily observation and enemy air strikes.

The times of the landing, the strength, tasks and combat areas of the assault force were adjusted and changed many times. This complicated the planning, organization and implementation of rear support for the troops.

The rear command body of the IV vdk was the rear services section of the corps staff consisting of a chief and his assistants according to types of supply (artillery, food, uniform). The corps did not have any rear units, subunits and facilities. The rear services section carried out the planning and supervising of logistic support for the formations and units from the corresponding district dumps. The brigades obtained their aviation, airfield engineer and parachute supplies from the dumps of the district and central air forces. In the rear services section there was no medical service but the chief of the corps medical service was subordinate to the section's chief.

The airborne brigades had an administrative-housekeeping unit and this included the chief of technical supply with an assistant for fuels and lubricants, military-technical and motor-tractor equipment, a brigade quartermaster with chiefs of the supply services (food and uniform), a chief of artillery supply and cash allowances. Each brigade had small dumps (ammunition, food and uniform) as well as artillery and motor vehicle shops. Under the brigade physician was a medical station (14 persons and an ambulance).

The assistant commanders for supply of the airborne battalions and the artillery battalions had under them the chiefs of the artillery and quartermaster supply as well as the housekeeping squads (9 men). The physician of a battalion headed a medical station (5 men).

Small size, the rear subunits of the brigades and battalions had limited capabilities.

The rear support for the IV vdk was to be organized by the rear services of the Western Front (rear services chief, Maj Gen Intend Serv V.P. Vinogradov). However, the corps commander did not receive any orders from the front relating to rear support. The front command felt that under the conditions of the brief independent operations in the enemy rear the corps would be supplied with that materiel which they landed with.

The landed delivery of transport for supply and evacuation was not planned. It was assumed that transport would be captured by the assault force from the enemy in the landing area. No provision was made either for repairmen or a driver reserve for these vehicles. There was also no planning to replenish the consumption and loss of materiel by air after the landing of the assault force. The airfields did not possess reserve supplies of food. Because of the delay in the start of the assault landing, the units began consuming the supplies which were to be dropped into the rear.

The plan for the airborne assault provided that all of the 65 aircraft assigned to the corps during the 15 hours of darkness would make two or three trips over a distance of 180 km. The units of the IV vdk were to be landed over a period of 2 days.⁵ In the calculation they proceeded from good weather conditions, a maximum effort by the crews and they considered neither combat losses nor the taking of the aircraft out of service due to technical reasons. They had not built up the necessary fuel supplies for the aviation at the starting airfields. No aircraft reserve was planned. The plan was clearly unrealistic as even with excellently organized operations by the airfields and with experienced aircraft crews, each sortie required 4-6 hours. The reason for these and certain other errors was the lack of the necessary experience in planning the use of transport aviation in airborne operations on the part of the generals and officers from the Directorate of the VDV Commander, the Air Forces, the staffs of the front and the IV vdk.

The airborne assault started on 27 January at 1430 hours from the Zhashkovo Airfield by the parachuting in two trips by PS-84 aircraft of the 2d Paratrooper Battalion, the forward detachment of the 8th vdbr. Participating in the first trip were 29 aircraft and only 17 in the second. Due to the error made by the crews, the battalion was dropped 15-18 km to the south of Ozerechni from an altitude of 1,500-2,000 m (instead of 400-600 m). The personnel and materiel were scattered over a distance of 20-25 km around Tabory. Of the 648 men dropped, by the morning of 28 January only 476 men had assembled. They were able to concentrate at the designated point also about 30 percent of the soft parachute bags (PDMM) with weapons, ammunition, skis and food.

During the night of 29 January, some 500 pairs of skis, 400 travois, shells, mines, grenades and rifle cartridges were parachuted into the Ozerechni area. After this trip only 10-11 transport aircraft were in working order. A portion of the planes was downed or damaged by the enemy in the air, others were destroyed at airfields and some were in nonoperating order.

Strongly felt was the unsuccessful choice of the Kaluga Airfield Center for the embarking of the force as it was 40 km from the front line, in a zone of active enemy air and clandestine reconnaissance and poor observance of the secrecy and camouflage measures in the units.

All three airfields in the area of Kaluga, Rzhavets and Zhashkovo were continually subjected to enemy strikes and the aircraft taking off encountered enemy fighters.

In the arising situation, the transport aviation from 28 January began to make only nighttime flights. On 1 January, it was decided to completely halt the further landing of the corps units from the Kaluga Airfield Center. Over the 6 days of operation, the transport aviation had been able to land 2,497 men (87 percent of the 8th vdbr) in the Vyazma area as well as 34,400 kg of freight (weapons, ammunition, food, skis and medicines).⁶

The headquarters of the IV vdk, units of the 9th and 214th vdbr and the remaining battalion of the 8th vdbr were returned by the command by rail to the Moscow airports. Preparations commenced for the further landing of the corps units. From this moment, the rear staff of the Western Front (chief of staff, Col D.S. Dollada) together with representatives from the directorates of the VDV and VTA commanders began to work out a plan for the rear support of the assault force. The new plan was also repeatedly changed and adjusted.

In planning new tasks for the IV vdk, the staff of the Western Front and the VDV Command took measures to prevent a repetition of the previously made mistakes. The corps commander received intelligence data on the enemy in the drop area; the air group for the airborne landing of the IV vdk was put under the VDV Commander (41 PS-84 aircraft and 23 TD-3); the Moscow airfields began to be securely covered by the forces of

antiaircraft artillery and fighter aviation of the Moscow Air Defense Zone; a reserve of aircraft was provided and before the start of the landing a support group with three radios and light signals was sent to the landing area. The task of greeting the group was given to the commander of a partisan detachment.

Regardless of all of this mistakes were not avoided. The airborne assault began late and lasted 7 days (instead of 3). Its successiveness was disrupted. Many crews lost their way and dropped the airborne force from high altitudes and a significant distance away from the destinations. Radios were not dispatched to the landing area. The numerous bonfires lit by the airborne troops, by the partisans, by our troops fighting in the enemy rear as well as by the enemy disoriented the crews. In fearing errors, certain crews (around 25 percent) returned to the airfield without having carried out the mission.

Logistic support was organized as follows. Each airborne troop carried with him 3 days of dry rations, 1-1.5 unit of fire of small arms ammunition, 2 hand grenades, a TNT block, a shovel or an axe. Medium machine guns, 50- and 82-mm mortars, antitank rifles and ammunition for them as well as skis, supplies of medicines and medical equipment were packed in the PDMM and dropped simultaneously with the assault forces.

No reserve was created for weapons as well as materiel in the event of their loss.

The dropping of weapons, ammunition and other freight was carried out unsuccessfully: far from the landing of the assault forces and scattered up to 15-25 km. A portion of the weapons, skis and other materiel was ruined on hitting the ground, ice or trees and here one felt the inexperience of the airborne troops in packing the freight in the PDT. The collecting of the cargo was impeded under the conditions of the wooded terrain and lack of roads, the heavy snow cover and poor visibility (nighttime, storm) as well as the counteractions of the ground enemy and its aviation. During the first 2 or 3 days after the drop, they succeeded in collecting only from 32 to 55 percent of the dropped freight.⁷ The situation demanded the organizing of the delivery of materiel by the transport aviation from the initial airfields.

In March-April 1942, for the IV vdk per day they delivered an average of 15-18 tons of materiel (80 percent ammunition, 12 percent food and 8 percent other freight) with a minimum requirement of 85-100 tons. The basic portion of the deliveries was comprised of ammunition and this made it possible for the battalions and brigades of the IV vdk to maintain battleworthiness. As a total during the period from 9 February through 19 June 1942, the air transport groups made 1,868 aircraft sorties in the interests of the IV vdk, including 1,376 (73 percent) successful. The airborne troops received a significant amount of all types of

materiel. At the same time, a portion of the aircraft returned to the starting airfields without having carried out the mission.

Air deliveries were also impeded by the numerous levels and complexity of control of the forces of the different levels (the VTA and airfields were under the air forces and the Civil Air Fleet; the transport gliders and the packers of the PDT were under the VDV; the tow aircraft were under the long-range aviation; the freight and packaging were controlled by the corresponding supply services). The battle support for the VTA was organized by the NKO, the staffs of the front, air forces, and air defense. The rear staffs of the Soviet Army and the front were concerned with the transporting. Crated freight was delivered to the airfields by the central and district dumps. They were loaded into the aircraft by the non-T/O teams from the dump service units. The areas for the drop (unloading) of the freight were prepared by the troops for which the freight was destined. They also collected the dropped equipment. There was not enough PDT, packaging materials, parachute systems and teams for packing the parachutes and loading freight.

It was difficult to organize good teamwork for all the elements of this complicated mechanism, particularly as the enemy endeavored to disrupt it at all stages.

What could not be delivered by air was made from available supplies or acquired in fighting against the enemy garrisons. Units of the 8th vdb just in the fighting of 8 and 9 February captured around 200 motor vehicles, 64 motorcycles and even several tanks and armored personnel carriers. Since there were no repairmen and drivers trained to rebuild and operate the vehicles, the captured equipment was destroyed and they used horse-drawn carts and sleds as the main means of transport. Travois and skis were also employed. Frequently freight was delivered by porters.

In the course of the fighting, a significant amount of food, weapons and ammunition (for example, the dump at Ugra Station) was captured from the enemy. With the aid of the local population, the assault troops in the forests located supplies of weapons and ammunition left by our retreating troops in 1941. Procurement of food from local supplies was difficult as the food stocks had been devastated by the enemy. Moreover, in many population points there was a large number of refugees from Smolensk and other places. For the units of the IV vdk and the I Guards Cavalry Corps, the party obkoms and raykoms provided food supplies from the kolkhozes (including seed stock). Meat was replenished by personal livestock which the partisans confiscated from persons working for the enemy (on town councils, as elders or policemen). The rayispolkoms also requisitioned livestock from citizens with small families. Here they were given written certificates for its return after the rayon was liberated of the occupiers.

The shortage of materiel required the centralizing of its distribution. On the staff of the IV vdk they organized a

non-T/O body for the command of the corps rear services and two dumps: ammunition and food. The corps dumps were secretly set up in sparsely inhabited remote areas and in forests, in the center of the area of the assault party's operations, a distance from 4-6 to 10-12 km from the line of combat contact with the enemy. Not far from them they prepared areas for the receiving of supplies delivered by aviation, and a corps evacuation receiving station was set up for wounded awaiting evacuation by aircraft to the front's hospitals. Under the chief of the corps rear services was a landing team which prepared the areas for the dropping of freight and the landing of aircraft as well as a team for collecting and storing the freight; these were organized from recovered sick and wounded. Both teams frequently participated in fighting.

Requests for materiel indicating the strips and the date of delivering the cargo were sent by coded radiograms to the front's staff. Delivery was made by PS-84 aircraft and in April-May also by light (U-2) and heavy (TB-3) bombers. On the return trips they evacuated wounded. The rear staff of the Western Front informed the IV vdk by radio as to how much of what freight would be delivered at what time, to what strips and in what packaging; the number and type of aircraft to be used for the delivery; signals for designating the landing strips. In the event of dropping freight by parachute, the drop height, the number, type and marking on the packaging were given. Sometimes the aircraft dropped freight from a low-altitude flight without parachutes.

Although because of serious shortcomings in the operation of the rear services, the bad weather and the limitation of the transport aircraft the delivery of materiel by air was carried out without interruption, it did play an important role in supplying the units of the IV vdk. Thus, just on 11-20 March, the corps received by parachuting 5 medium machine guns, 10 82-mm mortars, 1,500 rounds for the 45-mm cannons, 900 82- and 50-mm mortar rounds, 200 kg of medical supplies and around 7-8 daily food rations.

The spring muddy season began in April. It was impossible to employ either sleds or carts for delivering the materiel. Everything necessary had to be carried on horse pack and sometimes carried by the men.

The materiel was delivered from the corps dumps to the brigade ones and from them to the battalion ones. The battalions frequently received supplies directly from the corps dumps as well. Sometimes the freight was dropped in the areas of the battalion dumps by U-2 aircraft from low altitudes on openings and roads adjacent to the dump.

The brigade dumps were located in the center of the combat zone not far from the battle formations of the battalions: 1-2 km on the offensive and 3-4 km on the defensive. The dumps were located in the forests and in ravines which were protected against observation and convenient to defend. They were guarded by teams of

recuperating soldiers. An all-round defense was organized around the dump and observation posts, patrols and details were set. The personnel of the rear subunits was armed with grenades and machine guns in addition to machine pistols and rifles.

During the period of raiding operations and in breaking out of encirclement, the air delivery of freight became seriously more difficult. The corps submitted requests while on the move. The rear staff of the front responded slowly to the incoming orders and was frequently late in providing information on the delivery of freight by aircraft. The corps units moved to new areas while the arriving aircraft sought them out in the previous ones. Sometimes the corps subunits were unable to collect the dropped freight. The crews, without detecting the landing teams at the designated points, often returned to the airfields. The results of delivering freight by air to the assault force on 20 May 1942 were summed up in an order to the Western Front.

In the aim of increasing the responsibility of the crews for delivering materiel to the assault forces, the order required that all freight be marked with the number assigned to the aircraft. The chief of the front's rear services each day was to inform the recipients as to what freight would be delivered, by what numbers, where, how and when. The recipients were obliged to report immediately what freight was obtained when and with what numbers, what had not been received, what was damaged or dropped in the wrong place. The crews of the TB-3 aircraft were obliged to make one sortie per night while the PS-84 had to make at least two. The crews which delivered the freight to the airborne troops well were ordered to be put up for state decorations while all instances of the nonfulfillment of missions were to be investigated.

The measures adopted by the Western Front Military Council significantly improved the supply for the assault forces. However, the heavy fighting which broke out at the end of May almost completely excluded the possibility of planned air supply for the airborne units.

Medical support for the operation had its own characteristic features. According to the TOE, each company of a vdb [airborne battalion] was to have a medical instructor; at the medical station of a battalion there would be a physician, a feldsher, a medical instructor, two orderlies while in the brigade medical stations there would be three physicians as well as feldsher, the heads of the pharmacy and laboratory, a medical instructor, an orderly and a driver. The medical personnel was not up to strength.

A large portion of the medical stations (60 percent) was dropped far from their units and formations and for a long time could not serve the wounded.

The collecting of the medical stations continued until March.

Before the landing the medicines and medical supplies were divided into portable supplies and supplies which could be dropped on parachutes in PDMM. The portable supplies included three types of medical kits: physician-feldsher (ambulatory, bandaging) kit, the kit of the medical instructors and orderlies and a kit of additional supplies of bandaging material. Each battalion medical station (bmp) was given a set of B-1 (bandaging), B-2 (splints), a chemical warfare first aid kit (PKhS) as well as additional supplies of iodine and alcohol. All the supplies were dropped in four or five PDMM. A portion of the B-1 sets could be dropped in ordinary bags without parachutes. Stretchers were fastened on top the PDMM. Each assault troop was supplied with two individual packages. The physicians of the brigades were issued surgical instruments. After the landing, a portion of the medical supplies dropped in the PDMM could not be found and this greatly impeded the providing of aid and evacuation.

Soon after the drop, by a decision of the corps commander, from the military and civilian medics they organized a corps medical service headed by Mil Physician 2d Rank I.I. Molchanov. The front sent several physicians to reinforce the corps and in March began delivering prepared blood, alcohol and ether. The medical service obtained a portion of the medical supplies from local medical institutions as well as materials captured from the enemy. Parachute silk frequently replaced bandaging material.

With the aid of the partisans and the local authorities, improvised hospitals were set up in public buildings and private homes, in shelters and in places inaccessible to the enemy. In the spring, hospitals were set up in the forests in tents. They were guarded by teams of lightly wounded and recovered personnel. All wounded persons kept their personal weapons and they were to join the all-round defense in the event of an enemy attack.

The wounded were carried off the battlefield by the non-T/O stretcher-bearers from the subunits, by partisans and by local inhabitants. The wounded were evacuated from the companies to the bmp set up 5 km from the forward edge and then to the brmp [brigade medical station] and then to the hospitals, considering the hospital specialization. The medical subunits lacked medicines, linen and soap and there were no stretchers and transport. The lightly wounded usually made their way independently and the severely wounded were transported on carts. Sometimes the wounded had to be evacuated by hand on improvised stretchers. Even with the food shortage, each wounded man received daily 300 gm of rye bread, 200 gm of meat, potatoes and other foods. Warm meals were issued in the medical stations and hospitals. In breaking out of an encirclement, a portion of the nontransportable wounded was turned over by the assault forces to partisan detachments. Later on they were evacuated by aircraft to the front hospitals. As a total around 3,600 sick and wounded passed through the corps hospitals. Of these 2,136 (60 percent)

were returned from the corps hospitals to service and 819 men were evacuated by air. A portion of the wounded broke out of the enemy rear along with fighting troops.

The experience of the Vyazma Airborne Operation has shown that the rear bodies of the airborne formations and units were small in size, they were little prepared and under the difficult conditions could not successfully handle the tasks assigned to them. On the agenda was the question of reinforcing the rear units and strengthening the command element. In line with this in August 1942 the position of deputy brigade commander for rear services was introduced on the staffs of the brigades in the airborne corps. Subordinate to him were the brigade chiefs of the artillery, military-technical, food and clothing supply, the cash allowance chief and the brigade physician. Four dumps were maintained in a brigade: food, artillery weapons, parachute and clothing supply. According to the new TOE a brigade had an artillery shop and a transport platoon.

Much from the experience of rear support in the Vyazma Airborne Operation was later considered in conducting the Dnieper Airborne Operation (24 September—13 November 1943). Thus, in supporting the landing of the 1st, 3d and 5th Guards vdrb they planned to employ significant air transport forces including 180 Li-2 aircraft and 35 gliders.⁸ For supplying the assault force with materiel after its dropping, at the airfields they put in PDMM one unit of fire of ammunition and two daily rations of food. Ahead of time they set the standards for supplies carried by the personnel, and at the dumps of the airborne battalions and brigades. An air detachment of 10 U-2 (Po-2) aircraft was specially assigned for evacuating wounded and for delivering freight to the assault force a detachment of 25 Li-2 aircraft. Each airborne troop took with him food for 2 days and 2-3 units of fire of ammunition.⁹

At the same time, in the course of conducting this operation there were also errors and mistakes characteristic of the Vyazma Operation. Thus, intelligence did not sufficiently disclose the enemy grouping in the drop area of the assault force. The training of the crews and subunits of the VTA continued to remain poor. The assault landing was carried out by individual aircraft, from great altitudes and with significant discrepancies in the drop areas from the designated zones. This led to significant scattering of the assault forces and materiel.

The experience of rear support in the Vyazma Airborne Operation has shown that for directing the rear units and facilities involved in the airborne operations it is essential to have a single centralized command body given the appropriate rights and forces and that the questions of rear support for the airborne troops must be coordinated ahead of time with the command and the rear services chief of the field force for whom the airborne operation is being carried out.

The airborne corps needed not only organic rear services but also an aeromobile corps rear service. Here the rear services of the airborne formations must be prepared for extended autonomous actions and the rear units for fighting both against ground and airborne enemies. The regular air delivery of materiel to the assault force is possible only under the condition of the dependable neutralization of the enemy air defense system in the overflight area of the VTA.

The experience of rear support for the Vyazma Airborne Operation contains much that is instructive and of definite interest today.

Footnotes

1. "Sovetskiye vozdushno-desantnyye voyska" [Soviet Airborne Troops], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, pp 10-11.
2. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 29, inv. 76, file 241, sheet 519.
3. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1974, p 202.
4. "Sovetskiye vozdushno-desantnyye....," p 84.
5. Ibid., p 88.
6. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 35, inv. 11290, file 146, sheets 37, 67.
7. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 20086, file 122, sheets 24, 81-215.
8. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1977, p 206.
9. "Sovetskiye vozdushno-desantnyye....," p 212.

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First High-Altitude Ram

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[Article, published under the heading "Scientific Papers and Information," by Col V.V. Anuchin, candidate of military sciences: "The First-High-Altitude Ram"]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War, air defense for Moscow held a special place in the combat activities of the Air Defense Troops. Above all, this was caused by the importance of the installation covered. Direct defense for the capital against enemy air raids was entrusted to the units of the I Air Defense Corps and the VI Air Defense Fighter Air Corps (iak). On 22 June 1941, the latter consisted of 11 regiments and numbered 387 aircraft (175 Yak-1, MiG-3 and LAGG-3 and 212 I-16 and I-153).¹ A majority of the air units was based at

airfields located to the northwest, west and southwest of Moscow at distances of up to 120 km. Their mission was to intercept the enemy bombers on the distant approaches to the city.

During the first month of the war, the Nazis did not undertake air raids against Moscow. They employed this time for concentrating their best bomber squadrons at airfields closest to the capital of the USSR and for preparing them to launch massed strikes against Soviet cities, major rail junctions and other important objectives. At the same time, the enemy intensely conducted air reconnaissance. The first flights by reconnaissance aircraft over the territory of the Moscow Air Defense Zone were spotted on 1 July 1941 and 3 days later one of them appeared directly over Moscow.² In following days the intensity of conducting air reconnaissance significantly grew. In the areas of Vyazma, Gzhatsk, Volokolamsk, Rzhev, Torzhok, Sukhinichi there were almost constant patrols of individual crews and small groups of Nazi aircraft. In making the reconnaissance flights, they incidentally bombed railroad stations, trains on the move, highways and communications lines.

The Soviet leadership initiated emergency measures to strengthen the air defenses of Moscow. In particular, by 22 July there was a substantial increase in the quantitative strength of the VI iak and its quality had been improved. The number of air regiments in the corps was raised to 29 and the number of aircraft to 585 (170 MiG-3, 75 LAGG-3, 95 Yak-1, 200 I-16 and 45 I-153).³ The fighter pilots during the month which had passed since the start of the war basically fought enemy reconnaissance aircraft. They gained their first real baptism in fire in repelling the first massed Nazi air raid against the capital of our motherland during the night of 22 July 1941.

The enemy air armada numbering around 220 bombers flew in four waves with an interval of 30-40 minutes along the route Minsk—Orsha—Smolensk—Vyazma—Moscow. As the planes approached, searchlights, fighters and subunits of antiaircraft artillery and machine guns engaged them in battle. By their joint efforts the attempt by the Nazis to launch a major bombing strike was thwarted. Only several aircraft succeeded in breaking through to the city, and those were forced to drop their lethal load chaotically. During that night the pilots made over 170 aircraft sorties while the antiaircraft gunners expended around 29,000 shells and 130,000 cartridges. As a result the enemy lost 22 bombers, of which 12 were downed by aviators, including the leader of the entire group.⁴

Beginning on 22 July, the air raids against Moscow began to be made virtually every night. The strength of the enemy air groups varied from 50-80 to 100-120 aircraft. However, due to the skillful and heroic actions of the Air Defense Troops personnel, a majority of them was not let through to the city. For example, of the 1,700 bombers involved in the raids in July and August, not more than 70 broke through to the capital. The bombs

sporadically dropped by them did not cause major damage. At the same time, the losses of Nazi aviation were significant. Thus, the 53d and 55th Bomber Squadrons lost, respectively, around 70 and 50 percent of their strength. As a result, the Wehrmacht Command was forced to withdraw them from combat for reconstituting.

In the fierce air battles the pilots of the 27th (commander, Col P.K. Demidov) and 34th (commander, Lt Col L.G. Rybkin) Fighter Air Regiments (iap) particularly distinguished themselves. They inevitably gained the upper hand in the numerous clashes with the Nazi vultures. One of the duels which occurred merits a detailed description.

This occurred on the morning of 11 August 1941. At an airfield near Kalinin, where one of the squadrons of the 27th iap was based, the flight commander Lt A.N. Katrich and his wingman Jr Lt M.I. Medvedev were on combat alert. At around 1000 hours, a green rocket went up over the command post (KP) and this was a signal for a sortie. At the same time, the telephone rang at the parking area of the duty flight. From the KP it was announced that over Ostashkov a Nazi bomber had been spotted at a high altitude by the VNOS [air raid warning] post. The bomber was heading into the interior of our territory and the task was given of intercepting it. The pilots rushed to their aircraft, the high-altitude MiG-3 fighters. However, in the process of taxiing out the motor died on the aircraft of the wingman and Katrich flew out alone.

In approaching the designated point and in climbing, the pilot spotted the contrail left by the enemy aircraft and heading to the northeast. He quickly turned his fighter onto a parallel course and focused on locating the enemy as the visibility was good. The altimeter began to read 6,000 m. The air temperature outside dropped substantially. But the lightly dressed lieutenant did not pay any attention either to the cold or to the oxygen shortage, completely forgetting about the oxygen mask hanging in the cockpit. He had already realized that the air pirate was heading to the Bologoye rail junction. After several minutes of flight, this was completely confirmed. In maintaining the given heading, Aleksey Katrich saw the enemy aircraft above him at a distance of approximately 15 km. The characteristic silhouette with the double tail left no doubt it was a Dornier-217 bomber.

The Nazis frequently employed these aircraft for conducting air reconnaissance. One of them had already repeatedly appeared over the territory of the Moscow Air Defense Zone and always by surprise, from a new direction and at a great altitude. The pilots of the 27th iap who were on duty had attempted to intercept it but always without results. The Nazi scout operated very cautiously, it did not allow the fighters in close and each time successfully escaped from pursuit behind the front line. It did not initiate air combat, it did not bomb

although it caused a good deal of harm. After its reconnaissance flights, the airfields and other important installations around Moscow, as a rule, came under enemy air raids.

In the meanwhile, the enemy bomber, without reaching Bologoye, turned to the southeast and flew along the Moscow—Leningrad Railroad and Highway. All its actions brought Lt Katrich to the idea that this was the very uncatchable scout. The Soviet pilot, in continuing to climb, made a sharp turn. The fighter ended up somewhat to the right of the Do-217, thereby cutting off the possible escape route. However, it was still quite a ways to the enemy.

Finally, the MiG-3 reached approximately the same altitude as the Nazi bomber. The instrument showed 8,000 m. Katrich brought the airplane to level flight and increased speed. The distance between the aircraft began to noticeably shorten. The fighter overtook the enemy, keeping to the right at a slight angle. The main task now was to remain undetected as long as possible. But the Do-217 was following its previous course and its crew showed no indications of alarm. The Nazis, in all probability, felt themselves completely safe and were not particularly concerned for circumspection. They were firmly convinced that at this altitude they could not be reached either by the shells of antiaircraft artillery or a fighter interceptor.

The Soviet pilot resolved to approach the bomber as close as possible and fire only when certain as the Nazi gunner for some reason was silent. Katrich pressed the trigger only when the range had dropped to around 100 m. The long machine gun bursts caught the enemy aircraft from the starboard tailfin to the port engine which immediately began to smoke. There was no return fire but this time clearly because the gunner had already been killed. However, the air pirate continued its flight, only turning slightly toward the front line and descending slightly. Then Katrich, without stopping the close in, quickly reloaded the gun and again pressed the trigger. The fighter did not show its usual shaking and the machine guns were silent.

The unforeseen failure of the onboard weapon significantly complicated the situation. The enemy pursued by the unarmed MiG-3 was flying farther and farther to the west. But Aleksey Katrich had already taken the only correct decision in the given situation, that is, an air ram. He clearly realized that the Nazi bomber should be destroyed at any price. There were no doubts as to the success of executing the maneuver for striking the tail with the propeller. The confidence of the lieutenant was increased by the awareness that he was capable of doing everything as he should: during the prewar years the pilot had repeatedly participated in air parades where the aircraft flew wing to wing and with comrades had demonstrated group aerobatics requiring high precision of action and measured literally in centimeters. And the extra altitude in the event of a failure gave a chance to try to land or bail out.

Having somewhat calmed down, Katrich began to cautiously bring the fighter closer to the enemy scout. Through the glowing disc created by the turning propeller of the MiG, the right tail of the bomber could be clearly seen. Closer, even closer and one more movement...impact! The further actions by the pilot were also precise. In order to avoid a collision he reduced power, pulled the controls to him and pushed the port pedal as far as possible. His aircraft slid past the Do-217. Having quickly made certain that his fighter was alright, Aleksey did not let the enemy out of sight for a second. The Nazi vulture had gone into a right-handed dive. Katrich's aircraft was completely steady only there was a slight vibration in the engine. For this reason the Soviet pilot followed the enemy, ready to make a second blow.

The Nazi crew made every effort to even out the bomber which had gone out of control. At an altitude of around 600 m, it finally did this but not for long. Soon thereafter, the Do-217 went into an almost vertical dive and struck the ground. Seeing that he was in the area of the population point of Staritsa and having noted the site of the scout's crash, Lt A.N. Katrich headed back to his airfield. After several minutes of flight he landed his MiG-3 safely and taxied to the parking area.

The squadron already had news of the ramming. The pilots and technicians immediately began questioning the victor, they began to ask about the details of combat and inspected and felt the aircraft with curiosity. All were amazed that there were no noticeable damages to the fighter, only the tips of two or the three propeller blades had been slightly bend.

A representative of counterintelligence who was in the subunit proposed that Aleksey drive with him in a car to the point where the Nazi bomber had gone down. The officer established that this had occurred close to one of our airfields. Upon arrival they were met by the commander of the air unit based there, they were escorted to the remains of the air pirate and shown the bodies of the four crewmen. He also informed them that they had been able to remove the aerial camera equipment which was on the scout and together with the film cassettes had been sent immediately to Moscow. In leaving they offered Katrich to take as a souvenir of the victory won a pistol and jacket with several crosses of the killed Nazi pilot who had been the commander of the 165th Reconnaissance Air Detachment and a lieutenant colonel in the Luftwaffe.

The motherland had high praise for the courage and heroism of its son. For the feat performed by the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of October 1941, he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Presently, Col Gen Avn (Ret) Aleksey Nikolayevich Katrich lives in Moscow, the city the air frontiers of which he was devotedly defending in those memorable harsh days. He has also described in detail the first high-altitude ram in the years of the Great Patriotic War.

Footnotes

1. "Voyska protivovozdushnoy oborony strany" [National Air Defense Troops], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, pp 98, 99.

2. TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 72, inv. 56103, file 2, sheets 35-44.

3. Ibid., sheets 23-26.

4. "Voyska protivovozdushno oborony...", pp 106, 110.

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Let Us Honor Their Memory

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[Article, published under the heading "Chronicle, Facts, Findings," by Col A.P. Khorev: "Let Us Honor Their Memory"]

[Text] The spring snow which usually was no longer white, in 1942, in these areas was almost completely black from the German and Soviet bodies. Even after the war in the spring, the fields around Gzhatsk for some years were white with soldiers' bones. Here the fighting was stubborn and protracted. Having liberated Mozhaysk in January and approaching Gzhatsk our troops encountered organized enemy resistance. Over a period of 3 months, they launched attacks against the enemy, they drove off counterattacks and fought literally for each meter of our land.... Here is how this is described in the historical campaign record of the 108th Rifle Division kept in the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense.

"On 22 March 1942, the division was concentrated in the area of the villages of Ryzhkov-Sorokino. From the morning of 26 March, the regiments went over to the offensive with the aim of capturing the grove Sosnovaya [Pine] beyond which stretched an open expanse to Gzhatsk. The Germans had skillfully erected their defenses in the grove and the approaches to it on the right and left were covered by multilevel fire. They had covered the forward edge of the defenses with a line of battle outposts consisting of several snowbanks with timber embrasures.

"On 27 March, companies from the 3d Battalion of the 444th Rifle Regiment headed by the Btlm Commander Aliyev and Commissar Baykovskiy, having crossed three snowbanks, took four German dugouts. The stubborn fighting aimed at breaking into the grove lasted until 7 April. On that day the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 407th Rifle Regiment finally broke into the grove, they occupied three German dugouts the garrisons of which were completely annihilated. The attempts by the Germans to drive our units out of the grove were beaten off. The assault by our infantry was supported by antitank guns.

The gun commander, Comrade Andreyev from an open position hit a machine gun nest and scattered the counterattacking German groups. The company mortars of the crews of Gusev and Livakov supported the infantry advance with continuous explosions of shells and themselves moved up in the battle formations. Two battalions of the 444th Rifle Regiment entered the grove after the battalions of the 407th Rifle Regiment. Due to the low strength of the subunits, it was not possible to exploit a major success in the grove. From the morning of 8 April, the Germans, in defending desperately the important grove for them, undertook continuous counterattacks. On 9 April, there were four successive counterattacks. They suffered heavy losses and on that day there were around 200 soldiers and officers killed. In repelling the third counterattack, the antitank troops of the 3d Battalion of the 407th Rifle Regiment set two Nazi tanks afire. The next day, 10 April, the Nazis undertook a counterattack with the forces of 14 companies with over 1,000 officers and soldiers from the just-arrived reinforcement battalion. Hand-to-hand fighting broke out around the dugouts. The Nazi push was driven off chiefly with grenades. The fighting was led by the chief of staff of the 407th Regiment, Capt Glitsevich, the propaganda instructor, Sr Pol Instr Grober, and the chief of staff of the 444th Regiment, Sr Lt Volkov. Our units held their positions. During the night they rested and dried out as under the conditions of the spring mud they had been lying in wet snow.

"During the fighting in Sosnovaya Grove, the combat morale of the personnel did not drop."

Here is an excerpt from the combat log of the 407th Rifle Regiment: "9 April 42. Losses over the night and in the first half of the day up to 20 men killed and wounded, including 10 combat engineers killed and wounded in Sosnovaya Grove in engineer work. 10 April 42. Enemy succeeded in pushing back 3d Rifle Battalion by 100-120 m, occupying one trench on the right flank of the 444th Rif. Reg. The military commissar of the 3d Battalion, Sr Pol Instr Parman died heroically, and several commanders were wounded. The battalion continues to hold the three enemy dugouts occupied on 7 April in the southwestern part of Sosnovaya Grove."

The bloody but little successful fighting continued here until 20 April 1942. The offensive capabilities of our troops were depleted. The spring muddy season contributed to this. Headquarters ordered the going over to the defensive.

In the encyclopedias the events of the Rzhev-Vyazma Operation in 1942 are described in several lines. But in reality they cost the nation thousands of casualties and even now they evoke tears and pain in the hearts of the relatives and close friends of those soldiers who were buried then in these places and many of whom are still considered missing in action....

The Moscow trackers Ivan and Yuriy Borzov for a number of years have conducted energetic searches on

the territory of Gzhatskiy (now Gagarinskiy) Rayon of Smolensk Oblast. As a result of these in the sites of past battles they have found around 15 soldier ID tags. It has been possible to read 9 of the addresses removed from them. Here are their texts: "Semen Afanasyev, Red Armyman, born in 1913 from Amur Oblast"; "Aleksey Nikiforovich Trishin, combat engineer company of 444th Rifle Regiment. Mordovian ASSR, Temnikovskiy Rayon, Babeyevskiy Soviet, Tretyakovo Village, Natalya Yevdokimovna Trishina"; "Filipp Andreyevich Rakhmatov, Bashkir ASSR, Duvanskiy Rayon, Mesegutovskiy Rural Soviet. Anna Afanasyevna Rakhmatova"; "Nikola Vasilyevich Maslak. Private. Year of birth 1923. Poltava Oblast, Mirgorodskiy Rayon, village of Velikosorochinsk. Mariya Kostivna Maslak"; "Fedor Fedorovich Kostyukov, Private, born in 1908, city of Barnaul, Oktyabrskiy Rayon, Residential Square No. 34, Apartment 38. Aleksandr Kostyukov"; "Mamadamin Zaripov. Town of Katta-Kurgan, Samarkand Oblast, Akhunbabayev Street No. 22"; "Petr Ivanovich Timoshin, born 1903, Private, Gorkiy Oblast, Sergachskiy Rayon, village of Dyatlovskoye"; "Filipp Ilich Loginov, born 1913, Chkalov Oblast, Ponomarevskiy Rayon"; "Galyautdin Garifutdinov. Private, born 1912. Serovskiy Rayon of Sverdlovsk Oblast, village Filkino."

The Borzov brothers have brought their findings to us. We have checked these 9 names with the file of killed and missing personnel at the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense. Two of the mentioned soldiers: Aleksey Nikiforovich Trishin and Filipp Andreyevich Rakhmatov are listed as killed. The former fell on 10 April 1942, he was buried in the forest to the northwest of the village of Kurilovo (Gzhatskiy Rayon, Smolensk Oblast), and served as a private in the 444th Rifle Regiment of the 108th Rifle Division of the 5th Army. The second was killed on 29 March 1942, buried in the forest a kilometer to the south of the village of Sorokino, Gzhatskiy Rayon, Smolensk Oblast.

Two other soldiers from this tracker list—Filipp Ilich Loginov and Galyautdin Garifutdinov—are listed as missing in action in 1942. This information was discovered in the postwar reports of the military commissariats. The remaining 5 names were not found in the casualty file. More accurately, 4 of them, as there are many Semen Afanasyevs among the killed, including missing in action, but none coming from Amur Oblast.

The ID tags found at the burial sites leave no doubt as to the fate of the soldiers. The Gagarin City Military Commissariat has considered all the names of the soldiers as killed in action and the report files for them were forwarded to the TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense].

Not all of us, unfortunately, recognize this duty of ours. Moreover, some are amazed and make fun when they see how others devote their free time to this.

From the diaries of Ivan and Yuriy Borzov.

"Here is another box for you for your dead," they were once told about the soldier tags. And in the same disdainful tone they heard: "Remove this grave filth from the table, you have a strange affection for the dead." But we, the living, are the natural succession to them, the dead. Possibly our tracker search is an expression of our delayed affection for our departed fathers and grandfathers? Man differs from the animal in his feelings of affection, sympathy and common experience. Those who do not understand this seem dead to us. They adroitly pretend to be human. They smile and shake hands. Confident, vapid and inexorable. Is our terrestrial being their patrimony?

Ivan and Yuriy Borzov have named their search diaries "Gzhatsk Notebooks." There are four of them now. They are written after each field trip. Sketches are sometimes made directly in the field. They usually write together and are not surprised by their complete coincidence of ideas. They are like thinkers. Sons of a well-known frontline pilot, now deceased. Both are reserve lieutenants. They inherited their veneration for the soldiers who fell on the front most probably from their father, under the impact of his stories about the war. For them the search at the sites of the former fighting in the Greater Moscow Area has become the form of expression for this feeling. They have involved in this sacred undertaking their colleague, the artist and Sr Lt (Res) Aleksandr Brodskiy and the inductees Oleg Averkiyev and Denis Chernyak.

With permission from the authors I will quote fragments from their "Gzhatsk Notebooks."

...Along both sides of the road are fraternal graves, obelisks and monument pillboxes. But we are traveling further to where there are no obelisks. We halted on a large gently sloping hill with islands of birch. This area has long not been plowed and is covered with even green grass. Old residents have said that after the war there were barracks and dugouts here.

"You could not cross the field," said Aunt Fenya, "the corpses were just heaped up. We did not have any shoes and so the women who were bolder pulled the bones out of the boots and put them on...."

"We did not remove the bones from those fields," said a peasant some 50 years old continuing her story. "Where the bulldozer piled them up they were buried directly. You would start up the tractor and look far ahead, at some birch in order not to see what was happening under the tractor wheels.... Had I known that you wanted helmets, I could have brought you a trailer full from Kostrovo where I was plowing today. You don't have to look for them, they lie in each furrow. You know in virtually all the farmyards we have made choppers from the combat engineer shovels."

...In the fir grove you constantly come on helmets, mess kits and gasmask cannisters.... It is something like a city of the dead. It goes on and on. If you want to take a mess

kit or mug but everything is shot through with holes. The fire density is terrifying. Cannisters, boxes, everything like a sieve.

The films usually show our soldiers in boots and here they are all low boots. In movies the canteens are always aluminum and here they are glass.

...Some 2 m from us under a tree was a little beast. It looked at us with dark eyes and did not run off. A sable? A marten? The snout was round, the ears were small and the fur dark brown.... And what sort of beast was rummaging over there in the felled trees? We all at once realized that it was a bear cub with the sow.

...We came out on the edge of an unfamiliar field. What was that? A fresh grave. The mound was fenced with birch stakes and on it were helmets, magazines, a shield from a maxim and boots. A wreath from fir branches. An inscription on birch bark: "Eternal memory to the heroes who fell in the fighting for the motherland. SSO [Student Construction Detachment] Kurgan, Vologda." Clearly here students have been working in the field. They collected the bones lying around and made a grave. We stood beside the grave with our hats off. We had a look around. Some 5 m away under a birch was a small pit. We dug and immediately hit bones. A few minutes later and an ID tag was on the shovel. We opened it and the paper was completely preserved...our trip was already justified.

...Bones stuck out of the earth. We set to digging. At a depth of 30 cm there were human remains. They were lying in order, that is, it was not the bones that were dumped into the pit but a body had been buried. In one the hands were on the head as if protecting the face. There was a personal medical kit. The coat was disintegrated. We opened it and inside was a handful of black earth. All that remains of a person. But there should be documents! We dug around the belt. There was a pile, a purse and some money. Coins stuck together. It was intolerably hard to look at them. Farewell, soldier! We will not rob you but only want to understand. A minute later in our hand was a tag, we opened it and the paper was white and this promised that the text could be read.

We dug further: aluminum spoons, a cigarette holder and the insignia "For Marksmanship...."

Another tag. It was poorly fastened. We opened it and the paper had turned into dark rot. Oh, oh, soldier! Had you tightened this we would have learned your name and could have informed your relatives.

We dug farther and again a tag. Hats off! We opened it and it was empty. It was tightly fastened but empty. The soldier was probably suspicious and wanted to deceive fate....

...We found an entire "bone pit." We began to dig, we made a little mound, and in a clay mold from bullet lead

melted in a can on a fire we cast a five-pointed star, sank an upright and fastened the star to it....

We came out on a hilly plain and saw an attractive monument. The box-like structures from stainless steel were crowned with a shining bayonet. Inscription: "To my father Prygunov and his combat comrades who fell on this field in 1942-1943."

On the lower step lie a cigarette wrapped in cellophane and matches. As we understood, this was for us. Stop, traveler, have a smoke, recall the fallen soldiers and honor their memory. They did everything for us that they could and have we done everything for them?

Yes, there are among us, those alive, many who do everything possible for those who have fallen. Among these we cannot help but mention with admiration the widow of the Mil Instr Aleksey Ivanovich Semenov, Lyubov Mikhaylovna Naumova from the city of Kuybyshev. Her husband was missing in action on the front. He served in the airborne troops. On 23 February 1942, he landed in the enemy rear and since then was among the missing in action. Since that time Lyubov Mikhaylovna has been searching constantly for a trace of him. She has sent out hundreds if not thousands of letters to all ends of the nation. She read everything that appeared in the press about the airborne troops, she copied out names, established addresses and requested help in her search. And once Lyubov Mikhaylovna received notification: Pol Instr Aleksey Ivanovich Semenov had perished in fighting for the socialist motherland on 29 March 1942, he was buried in grave No. 2 on the eastern outskirts of the town of Gagarin, Smolensk Oblast.

Lyubov Mikhaylovna immediately left for her husband's grave. However, at the site in becoming acquainted with the file of the deceased, it became clear that here was buried actually the Pol Instr Aleksey Ivanovich Semenov, but he was a different person with the exact same name as the husband of L.M. Naumova....

Having scarcely recovered from this revelation, Lyubov Mikhaylovna resumed her search. She wrote to the archives, to the military commissariats, and to the disabled war veterans homes....

"Possibly he is leading a wretched life somewhere without any arms or legs," she said, "and if so my son, his bride and I will take him in as we have all conditions for this."

From the Belorussian Party Archives came promising news for Lyubov Mikhaylovna: Aleksey Ivanovich Semenov was on the lists of the Belorussian partisans and on 22 August 1944 he was paid his last pay. Lyubov Mikhaylovna took heart. But a further search showed that this person was merely someone else with the same name as her husband.

"I admit," said Lyubov Mikhaylovna, "my energy is running out. I have spent my life searching and have not found anything except two others with the same name as my husband...."

But she will scarcely put an end to her search here. The loyalty of military widows knows no bounds. We, of course, have fallen greatly behind in the work of establishing the fates of soldiers missing in action. The oversight is irremediable and unforgivable. During the first postwar years the military IDs would easily have disclosed their secrets to us, much could have been learned from the eyewitnesses of the events, but we did nothing. Numerous directives have been published on "systematizing the account of killed and wounded." But, unfortunately, far from everything has been done for this; even the bones of the soldiers, as we have seen, have not been collected everywhere.

At present, the nation has no single coordinating center to investigate those who did not return from the war.

"Investigative work," wrote Lt Col (Ret) V. Yerofeyev in letter, "has, in essence, been shifted to the amateur trackers and the relatives of those who have fallen, each of whom follows his own reason and capabilities. The number of nameless graves and missing in action is declining super-slowly. The motto 'no one is forgotten, nothing is forgotten' is being turned into a good intention, into mere talking shop."

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